

HOMILETICS WORKSHOP
FOR ROMANIAN LAY MINISTERS
PREACHING IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MISSION CONTEXT

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
PAUNEL MURESAN

MAY 2012

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
ABSTRACT	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE	1
Identification of the Problem	1
Purpose of the Curriculum	1
History and Current Opportunity	3
The Need for and Importance of This Curriculum	4
Definitions of Terms	5
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL METHOD	11
Introduction	11
The Act of Preaching from a Biblical Perspective	15
The History of Biblical Preaching	16
The Call to the Preaching Ministry: God's Initiative	19
The Necessity for Preaching: God's Call	23
Preaching as a Spiritual Gift: God's Gift	24
The Importance of Preaching: God's Plan	26
The Act of Preaching: God's Act	28
The Authority of Preaching: God's Power	30
Lay Preaching: The "Priesthood of All Believers"	33
Necessary Training in Constructing Expository Sermons	36

3. LITERATURE REVIEW	38
Books about Hermeneutics and Homiletics	38
Books about Teaching and Instruction	70
Interviews	73
Articles from <i>Pleroma</i>	104
4. PREACHING CURRICULUM	108
Introduction	108
Lesson 1, Introduction to the Course and the Call to Preaching Ministry	109
Lesson 2, Definition, Purpose and Importance of Expository Preaching	121
Lesson 3, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Selecting and Studying a Text	129
Lesson 4, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Getting the Big Idea of the Text, Subject and Complement	139
Lesson 5, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Developing Questions and Formulating the Homiletical Idea	148
Lesson 6, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Determining Purpose and Helps as it Relates to the Audience; Guidelines for Purpose and Outcomes	159
Lesson 7, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Preparing Impacting Introductions and Memorable Conclusions	168
Lesson 8, Stages of Sermon Preparation:	

Choosing Supporting Material	177
Lesson 9, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Designing the Outline and Efficient Use of Transitions	184
Lesson 10, Effective Sermon Delivery	191
5. INSIGHTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	206
Appendix	
1. RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE:	
WORKSHOP ON CALL TO MINISTRY	211
2. HOW TEACHING AND PREACHING DIFFER AND OVERLAP: WILLIAM CARL III	225
3. SERMON EVALUATION	227
BIBLIOGRAPHY	233
VITA	239

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1	Path of the Gospel	43
2	Steps in Communication	70
3	Groups of Audience	165
4	Five Levels of Illustration Impact	183

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am who I am today because of twelve people who taught me lessons of life:

My wife, Tatiana, taught me *patience*. For many years she was present and supporting my journey through institutions of learning.

My daughter, Tasha, taught me *passion*. She said she learned it from me. Even if there is some truth to this, observing her love and compassion for people taught me to grow in appreciating the importance being passionate not dull and boring.

My son, Jean-Paul, taught me *trust*. In his eyes, I can do no wrong.

My dad taught me by being my *role model*. I admire him for everything he did, does and I know God will give him the ability to do.

Art McIntosh taught me *integrity*. I worked with Art at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newport Beach for twelve years. On countless occasions I saw him standing up for what was right without compromising himself or the ministry.

R. C. Sproul taught me a *love for the Word of God*. I fell in love with Reformed Theology as explained and taught by R.C.

I was taught the love and skills for *preaching* by Dr. Haddon Robinson. He introduced me to the "One Idea" concept of preaching and as well first person preaching.

Dr. Dick Todd, taught me skills in *pastoral ministry*. He is my friend and my mentor allowing me to draw from his fountain of wisdom gained in his decades of ministry.

Growing up in Romania, Pastor Leontiu Constantin taught me *integrity in ministry*. For decades under communism rule, I observed his ministry. He gave me the first challenge to preach the Gospel. He is my life pastor.

Nelu Pastor is a minister in Romania. He taught me *simplicity and contentment*. He is devoted to his call to minister in small villages and he does it with gratitude in plenty and in want; when he was well and when he was sick.

Chris Brown taught me *perseverance*. For years I observed his heroic fight to maintain the integrity of his family, fighting every obstacle imaginable.

And finally, *obedience* I learned from Jesus. I know him from reading about him. I know Jesus from talking with him. What strikes me the most about the "Divine Jesus" is that he became a man; a man of suffering and through obedience chose to take my place by dying on the cross. He died in my place and that makes every difference in my life!

ABSTRACT

Homiletics Workshop for Romanian Lay Ministers Preaching in National and International Mission Context was written as a resource for training lay and ordained preachers in Romania to advance the Gospel of Christ through powerful, clear and efficient preaching.

In the process of writing this thesis the author was challenged to select the best resources that will serve the needs of the Romanian preachers. The author conducted interviews in Romania. He also used electronic means to gather the information needed for the writing of this document.

The author is confident that the thesis will become a useful tool on instruction for present and future Romanian preachers.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Identification of the Problem

For over two decades, I have been involved in mission work in my homeland of Romania. I observed the birth and the evolution of freedom in a country which, for too long, suffered oppression and struggles unknown to much of the world.

One of the most fascinating discoveries was the youth who had a passion for the Lord and the Gospel of Christ. Without any bias, I can say that in all my world travels I have never witnessed such desire to serve as I saw in many of the Romanian youth. In their local churches, pastors observed their passion and offered them the pulpits to serve in the ministry of preaching and encouraging the people in the pews. Their sermons were coming from the heart and much study of the Scripture.

Year after year, I observed young men who desired to preach the Word with effectiveness and conviction. Hearing their sermons, I heard passion and love for the Gospel. Yet, very soon I was convinced of their need to be taught homiletical skills and in the long run be provided with guidance and support.

Purpose of the Curriculum

The desire to write on the theme of preaching in a missionary context comes from several experiences and perspectives.

The first reason is very personal. I was in my teenage years when my pastor saw potential in me and challenged me to preach in our church of about 900 people. He gave me no text, no direction but just asked me to preach. My assignment was for a Thursday

following our conversation on a Sunday evening. That gave me four days and four sleepless nights. After my first preaching experience, he encouraged me to continue to preach and gave me his total support but no direction as to preparation of sermons, delivery or other ministry tools. Weekend after weekend, he sent me out to preach in villages around our city. At times the preaching was great, people received the Word. Other times I had some surprises. There were times when I needed much of the Lord's grace. For approximately four years I spent most of my weekends traveling and preaching in the western part of Romania. My preaching became better with time, but still needed a lot of improvement. All my preaching activities were under the supervision of my local church. But once again, there was no direction or coaching on how to preach.

A second reason I wanted to write on the subject of preaching in missionary context comes from my missionary work in Romania since 1991.

Annually, a group from different churches in the Orange County area has been traveling to Romania. Our purpose for going is to train Christian leaders in their ministry across my homeland. During these years, I have been training youth workers, conducting conferences for pastors and youth. Part of the training of youth ministers and children's ministry leaders was through conducting VBS programs. These programs gave them hands-on experience and practical ways of learning. Our largest VBS was in 2005 when we had 925 children and we worked with 30 Romanian youth for our entire two week stay. From those settings, I started to recognize talented youth and sensed that they might have a call from the Lord to be in preaching ministry. As I reflect on my own experience, I might have the same "gift of recognition" my pastor had when he first got me thinking about preaching. For the past few years, we have been sponsoring young Romanians to

attend theological training in Bucharest. They are now active ministers of the Word and Sacrament in Romania with preaching opportunities in national and international context.

The curriculum prepared in this thesis will serve as a tool of instruction for a better preparation and delivery of their sermons.

The need and the potential are far greater than I can even imagine. Year after year I see new youth who are prime candidates for the ministry of preaching. They are not pastors and perhaps some will never become pastors. But Sunday after Sunday, challenged by their pastors in their local churches, they rise to preach the gospel of Christ. Considering the large number of these youth and their love for the Lord, gives me confidence that Romania will experience an amazing transformation of leadership and will become a force of theological influence in Europe and across the world.

History and Current Opportunity

For forty years Romania was under communist rule. The church was doing very well but was under great scrutiny and limited in its ministry. One of the greatest drawbacks was that there was no theological education available. There were a couple of seminaries in the entire country with great limitation on the number of students attending and with very scarce resources. The placement of the graduates was highly politicized. Since the Revolution of 1989, the doors of opportunity have been wide open and the church has great potential to grow and capture the minds and hearts of people in great numbers.

The past decade has been characterized by an extraordinary growth in theological education, specialized ministries and mission work. Romania has become a missionary

sending country throughout the whole world. At the present time, Romania has active missionaries in countries in the Middle-East, Europe, China, Japan and India. The mission field is continuously expanding.

The Need for and Importance of This Curriculum

In recent years there has been a migration of Romanians all across Europe. Most of them are young Romanians looking for work. Six years ago I was in Spain and visited a large Romanian community settled just outside Madrid. Romanians have also settled and started churches in Rome, Paris and some cities in Germany. Thinking about these young people witnessing in their local settings and remembering their passion for the Lord, makes me believe that Europe will spiritually catch on fire as the result of their witnessing and preaching.

Very encouraging news is the establishment of new mission organizations in Romania. These organizations are sending missionaries throughout the country as well as all over the world. I would like to contribute to their mission by providing them with the valuable resource.

The task is great and intimidating, but I have hope in the support from those who will catch the same vision I have and will contribute in some way. I am looking forward to working alongside those who love to preach and understand the value of good preparation and delivery of the Word of God.

I would like to write this curriculum on preaching in the context of mission because through my educational experience at Gordon-Conwell, I received tools of instruction that will benefit the lay leaders of Romania and the youth who are rising in the

pulpits to declare the majesty of God. These youth are tomorrow's evangelists. They need to be equipped to preach effective and powerful messages in the mission field in Romania and throughout the world.

Definitions of Terms

Preaching

Preaching is "the oral communication of biblical truth by the Holy Spirit through a human personality to a given audience with the intent of enabling a positive response."¹

Thomas Long defines *preaching* as "an alloy of art and craft, gift and training- something like playing the piano. People must have at least some raw ability playing the piano, but most of all they must be willing to master the scales, study the appropriate techniques, learn the music, and practice resolutely."²

Human speech is unique of all human gifts and sets apart humans from the rest of God's creation. *Preaching* is a speech. It is "the noblest use of power of speech" and the "consciousness of possessing speaking power is a heavy responsibility. The preacher's problem is to make sure he uses his power wisely, for Christian purposes, for God's great objective."³

Bryan Chapell emphasizes the importance of preaching by saying, "The goal of preaching is not merely to impart information but to provide transformation ordained by a

¹ Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999), 27.

² Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 25.

³ Ilion T. Jones, *Principles and Practice of Preaching: A Comprehensive Study of the Art of Sermon Construction* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), 15.

sovereign God that will affect the lives and destinies of eternal souls committed to a preacher's spiritual care."⁴

The Preacher

The preacher is God's ambassador bringing the good news of reconciliation to the world. This definition comes from Paul's writings to the church in Corinth, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."⁵ In his book, *The Preacher's Portrait*, John Stott describes the *preacher* as a steward, a herald, a witness, a father and a servant. He takes a whole chapter for each description. In the same mind, Thomas G. Long's *The Witness of Preaching* presents us with images of the preacher as the herald, the pastor and the storyteller. Considering the call and the role of *the preacher*, John Piper writes, "The grand design of the Christian preacher is to restore the throne and dominion of God in the souls of men."⁶ Who speaks for God? Raising and answering this question, Chuck Colson writes, "He does quite nicely for Himself, through His holy and infallible Word- and the quiet obedience of His servants."⁷

Lay People

Lay people are Christians who are not formally theologically trained. They are involved in ministry but are not ordained as clergy. A person who is a member of a religious order who is not ordained to the legitimate clergy is considered as a member of

⁴ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 25.

⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:20. Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

⁶ John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990), 27.

⁷ Charles Colson, *Who Speaks for God?* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1985), 22.

the laity, even though he/she is a member of a religious order (for example, a nun or lay brother).

Expository Preaching

Expository preaching is the “communication of a biblical concept derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical and literary study of a passage in its context which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.”⁸ Bryan Chapell defines *expository preaching* as “a message whose structure and thought are derived from a biblical text, that covers the scope of the text, and that explains the feature and the context of the text in order to disclose the enduring principles for faithful thinking, living, and worship intended by the Holy Spirit, who inspired the text.”⁹ Richard Ramesh writes “Expository preaching is the contemporization of the central proposition of a biblical text that is derived from proper methods of interpretation and declared through effective means of communication to inform minds, instruct hearts, and influence behavior toward godliness.”¹⁰

An *expository sermon* is “a discourse that expounds a passage of Scripture, organizes it around a central theme and main divisions which issue forth the given text, and then decisively applies its message to the listeners.”¹¹

⁸ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2001), 21.

⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 31.

¹⁰ Richard Ramesh, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 19.

¹¹ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 29.

Exegesis

Exegesis is “the careful, systematic study of the Scriptures to discover the original, intended meaning.”¹² It also defined as “the procedure one follows for the discovering the Holy Spirit’s intent in a bible passage.”¹³

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is “the science of interpreting what a passage of Scripture means.”¹⁴

Biblical hermeneutics is the study of the principles of interpretation of the biblical text. The person who is doing the interpretation looks at the original meaning of the text, what the text is saying and also what the text is not saying. The original intent of the author needs to be communicated to the existing audience.

Homiletics

Homiletics is “the culmination of applying the principles of hermeneutics and exegesis in an effort to understand a biblical text and communicate it to listeners.”¹⁵

Homiletics is the “art and science of preaching.”¹⁶

“A *homiletical outline* establishes how a text’s meaning is best communicated to a congregation.”¹⁷

¹² Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 23.

¹³ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 27.

¹⁴ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 28.

¹⁵ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 28.

¹⁶ William Evans, *How to Prepare Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1964), 11.

¹⁷ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 116.

Fallen Condition Focus (FCF)

Fallen Condition Focus (FCF) is “the mutual human condition that contemporary believers or nonbelievers share with those to or about whom the text was written which requires the grace of the passage for God’s people to glorify and enjoy him or for those who resist God to properly regard him and to be reconciled with to him.”¹⁸

Subject

Subject is “the complete, definite answer to the question, ‘What am I talking about?’ ”¹⁹

Complement

Complement is “the answer to the question, ‘What exactly am I saying about what I’m talking about?’ ”²⁰

Idea

Idea means “a distillation of life that abstracts out of a particular of experience what they have in common and relates them to each other.”²¹

The concept of the Central Idea of the Text (CIT) is defined as “a 15-18 word past tense statement interpreting what the text meant then.”²²

¹⁸ Zack Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World: Crafting Biblical Sermons That Connect with Our Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 45.

¹⁹ Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World*, 47.

²⁰ Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World*, 47.

²¹ Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World*, 47.

²² Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 130.

Sermon Design

Sermon design is “the arrangement and coordinating of the main body of a sermon according to two or more divisions that support the development of the given proposition.”²³

²³ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 148.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL METHOD

Introduction

I write this chapter to illustrate the role and importance of preaching theological biblical history. By reading this material, the students will be able to discern the importance of God's call to ministry in their own lives.

In the beginning, in his perfect act of creation, God made the man and the woman in his image. God blessed them, gave them dominion over his creation and enjoyed a perfect fellowship with them. There was nothing more exciting for the first couple than to hear the steps of God in the Garden, coming in for another visit. Through an act of disobedience, sin broke their relationship between God and His creation. Defeated by the crafty words of the serpent, Adam allowed himself to doubt God's instructions, and then succumbed to the power of temptation, gave up resistance and reasoning and ate the forbidden fruit.

The readers of the Bible know what followed after that. With a broken heart, offended by the disobedience of Adam and Eve, God chased them out of the Garden and placed an angel to guard it so that they would not be able to return.

Sin entered between God and his creation, and was passed from one generation to another. God has desired to reestablish and maintain a relationship with his creation because of his love. To maintain his communion with humanity he instituted laws, asked for sacrifices and burnt offerings, made covenants and spoke his Word. Sometimes he

spoke directly to the people he wanted to address and sometimes he used intermediaries, and so preaching was born.

Preaching is the unique way God uses, through a chosen messenger, to reach down to humanity and bring about a time of interaction. Preaching has tension, is confrontational and requires changes. It's the holiness of God coming in contact with the wickedness of men.

The Lord sends people into the world to cry out that God reigns, that he will not suffer his glory to be scorned indefinitely, that he will vindicate his name in great and terrible wrath, but that for now a full and free amnesty is offered to all the rebel subjects who will turn from their rebellion, call on him for mercy, bow before his throne, and swear allegiance and fealty to him forever. The amnesty is signed in the blood of his Son.¹

In this paragraph, John Piper captures preaching, the preacher and the message. It is the totality of God's effort to reach the ears of the offender.

Keeping in mind this indivisible trilogy of sender, messenger and message, let us look into sections of Deuteronomy 4 and Deuteronomy 6 as examples of God's involvement in the lives of his people and how he carries the message in their lives.

Deuteronomy 4

In Deuteronomy 4:1-2, we read,

"Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you."

¹ John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990), 27.

These verses take us to a classroom setting. The teacher is about to teach and is calling for the attention of the listener. The time is now, the subject is the Law of God, the purpose is learning the truth and the basis of learning is on evidence of past times. It also looks like a church worship service.

The text continues:

“You saw with your own eyes what the LORD did at Baal Peor. The LORD your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor, but all of you who held fast to the LORD your God are still alive today.

“See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

“Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when he said to me, ‘Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.’ You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens, with black clouds and deep darkness. Then the LORD spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets. And the LORD directed me at that time to teach you the decrees and laws you are to follow in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”²

This is the message from God to his people, loaded with words of action. The message reflects a caring relationship, like that of a parent to a child. Look, keep looking, and remember, be careful these are words of instruction and guidance. It also feels and looks

² Deuteronomy 4:3-14.

like a church service, where the pastor tenderly points people to the love, mercies and holiness of God. It is a constant reminder, constant guidance, a relationship, a connection with the mind of God for the people in the pew.

The rest of Deuteronomy 4 continues on the same note of instruction with regard to the subject of idolatry, the goodness of God and his projection of who he is into the lives of his peoples leading to the giving of the Law in Deuteronomy 5.

Deuteronomy 6

After the hearing of the Law, the tension rises as people are challenged to learn, remember and keep the Law. The text feels like God steering people in their eyes and then he speaks his ultimate goal for them:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one, Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”³

The message of God’s personal concern and ultimate objective for Israel carries on throughout the Old Testament and is sealed in the words of Christ in Mark 12, when a teacher of the Law asks Jesus to identify the greatest commandment.

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.’”⁴

³ Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

⁴ Mark 12:29-31.

The Act of Preaching from a Biblical Perspective

Preaching is taking a God-inspired message, prepared and delivered with clarity, passion and conviction by a preacher, to an audience ready to be saturated with a word of instruction. Dr. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones defines true preaching as “God acting.”⁵ The preacher is not acting alone, but is allowing God to *use* him for the proclamation of God’s Word, through the influence of the Holy Spirit. From a biblical point of view there are many names attributed to the preachers. They are called ambassadors, heralds of the Good News sent by God, messengers of God’s grace.

The ultimate goal of preaching is elevating God in the eyes of the hearers. The ground of preaching as well as the goal of preaching is God. God reveals himself to us through the spoken word. Just like the prophets of the Old Testament, the preacher rises before the audience and declares, “Thus saith the Lord.”

Preaching should be doctrinal. It is about handling biblical truth with accuracy. “The doctrinal preaching is both content centered (teaching to instruct the mind) and intent centered (preaching to move the heart).”⁶ This means preaching is both *didache* (teaching) and the *kerygma* (proclamation). The teaching functions more as ethical instruction and is more of an apologetic tool of instruction. The act of preaching *keryssein*, meaning “to proclaim” is the act by which the preacher becomes the town crier, the herald announcing the divine message. “The main burden of the *kerygma* is that the unprecedented happened; God has visited and redeemed His people.”⁷

⁵ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 95.

⁶ Robert Smith Jr., *Doctrine That Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 1.

⁷ C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), 33.

The History of Biblical Preaching

The origin of preaching is God. He spoke the first sermon. In the Garden he asked Adam and Eve, “Where are you?” It is not that he did not know. He wanted them to know that their relationship was breached by disobedience. He knew what they had done. Even though they suffered the consequences of their action, God pursued them. Generation after generation, God engaged in a relentless pursuit.

The nation of Israel was formed and sustained by preaching. “Shema, Israel! Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”⁸ For Israel, God was personal!

To maintain connection with Israel, God called the prophets to speak his heart. Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others spoke boldly at times putting their lives in jeopardy. Their lives were altered by God’s call. Realizing the high call and the great responsibility to be God’s spokesmen they shivered with fear. Being a prophet of God required both courage and humility. Isaiah said, “Woe to me!” “I am ruined. For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”⁹ Frederick Buechner *Peculiar People* describes Amos: “When the prophet Amos walked the main drag, it was like a shoot-out in the Old West. Everybody ran for cover.”¹⁰

The call of Hosea was rather peculiar. The prophet was instructed to marry Gomer, a prostitute. Thus he began to be a walking illustration before the people of Israel representing the nation’s adultery in following other gods. In a tradition where the names

⁸ Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

⁹ Isaiah 6:5.

¹⁰ Frederick Buechner, *Peculiar People: A Biblical Who’s Who* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1979), 11.

were very important, even the names of his children showed God's abandonment. Micah is the prophet announcing that doom followed expression of hope in each of the three divisions of the book. He reproaches the unjust leaders, defends the poor against the oppression of the rich and is an advocate for social justice. His proclamation is bold and courageous.

Looking onto the New Testament, the list of preachers starts with the proclamation of John the Baptist followed by Peter, Paul, the apostles and then a plethora of witnesses to the Gospel who impacted the preaching in the first century church. John the Baptist is the culmination of the prophetic voice pointing to the appearance of Christ. The reader of the Gospel is breathlessly taken to the place where at the sight of Jesus, John pointed his finger and declared with exaltation "Look the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."¹¹

The prophets' witness was carried through the preaching of the early Fathers like Chrysostom, Augustine and Ambrose to name just a few. John Chrysostom is believed to be the greatest preacher in the early church. His major contribution was the writing of homilies, which are homiletical works on the New and the Old Testaments. He was a very eloquent preacher and after his death was named *crysostomos* meaning golden mouthed. Contemporary with him was Saint Augustine, the bishop of Hippo. In the protestant circle he is given the merit of being one of the forefathers of the Reformation because the focus of his preaching was on salvation and grace. Even though there are many great preachers not named by me in this narrative, I will now turn to the Reformation era.

¹¹ John 1:29.

The Reformers sought to elevate the Word of God as the most supreme revelation from God. Martin Luther was fully devoted to teaching, preaching and writing studies. Other than that, he said he *did nothing*. For John Calvin, the true hallmarks of the church were the faithful preaching of God's Word and the administration of the sacraments. John Stott sees the two Reformers as the main influencers towards the development of the practice of systematic exposition of Scripture. Luther is characterized by great imagination and Calvin had more of a cool and analytical mind.¹²

Stepping into another era of great preachers, we acknowledge the contribution of John Wesley and George Whitefield. I chose these preachers because they were very influential in the Christian movement in America. Wesley's great accomplishments were the establishing of societies of Christians and the use of non-ordained preachers to serve the needs of these societies. He was a very powerful itinerant preacher. Wesley held the *Arminian* doctrine of salvation. George Whitefield, the founder of Methodism, held to the *Calvinist* doctrine. Whitefield was a great communicator and traveled throughout the American colonies.

The next wave of preachers I will just mention briefly by name and some of their particular accomplishments. I am sure that I am leaving out great names. The list is more representative of few centuries of preaching. Dwight L. Moody was a great itinerant preacher. It is believed that he traveled over one million miles and spoke to over one hundred million people. And, of course, there is no way to know the number of those who accepted Christ through his preaching. John Wycliffe had the vision to put the Scripture into the hands of common people throughout the world. His mission is still

¹² John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 317.

carried out by countless number of missionaries. Charles Grandison Finney was known for revivals, A. W. Tozer for his insight in pursuing God, Jonathan Edwards for the Great Awakening, and Charles Spurgeon for his memorable sermons which still inspire preachers today.

If you want to know who the top preachers in the America and the world are today it varies on whom you are asking. People have preferences and it seems to be based on popularity depending and exposure. In our day with television and internet, the popularity of preachers spreads quickly. Some well-known names are John McArthur, Allistair Begg, R.C.Sproul, John Piper, Haddon Robinson, Charles Swindoll, Francis Chan, Ravi Zacharias and many others. I would be remiss not to acknowledge that while these popular preachers of the Word are being recognized all over the world, there are millions of preachers who diligently prepare and Sunday after Sunday preach the Word of God with passion, conviction and efficiency. They minister in large churches, small village churches, tents, dirt floored shacks, under the starry skies, in secret places to avoid persecution, in prisons and in their homes.

The Call to the Preaching Ministry: God's Initiative

“Preaching should rank as the noblest work on earth.”¹³

The call to ministry is *personal*. In the Book of Acts, after Saul encounters the Lord on his way to Damascus, the Lord asks Ananias to go the house of Judah of the Straight Street because “this man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.”¹⁴ Paul in turn asks people for a

¹³ Andrew W. Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1948), 13.

¹⁴ Acts 9:15.

personal spiritual worship by bringing their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.¹⁵ In most cases when God called a person into ministry he or his prophetic messenger called that person by name.

Secondly the call is *definite*. In some cases the call was not met with great excitement. The person called felt unqualified for such task. In Exodus, Moses feels he cannot lead the people alone and asks for help. The Lord's answer was, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."¹⁶ God's call *varies* from individual to individual. The call was initiated in the tabernacle as in the case of Samuel, recorded in 1 Samuel 3:1-18, in the temple as in the case of Isaiah, recorded in Isaiah 6:1-13 and even on a dirt road as in the case of Paul recorded in Acts 9. As God initiates the call he places an irresistible desire to witness. When the prophet Jeremiah was downcast and considered not speaking for God any longer, he recognized this fiery power saying inside him, "But if I say, 'I will not mention him or speak any more in his name', his word is in my heart like a fire, shut up in my bones."¹⁷ In the same way, the Apostle Paul recognizes that same drive saying, "Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"¹⁸

The Call of the Disciples and the Great Commission

The Great Commission is a good illustration of God's initiative to call disciples.

First I will focus on the Gospels' account of the call of the disciples. Ordinary people yet through discipleship they carried out the story of redemption even in extreme

¹⁵ Acts 12:1.

¹⁶ Exodus 33:14.

¹⁷ Jeremiah 20:9.

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 9:16.

circumstances. After their training at the feet of Christ, the disciples were sent away. The Great Commission starts with the sending of the faithful disciples to make more disciples and ends with the assurance of Christ's presence in their mission.

The call of the disciples is very fascinating. The simplicity of the words and the perception of the reader of the accounts demonstrate the existence of a mysterious power behind the words. Matthew and Luke describe Jesus walking by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. When he saw Peter and Andrew casting their nets into the sea he said, "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men."¹⁹ They did not ask for clarification of what it means to fish people, they did not come up with any excuses, but the Gospel writer says they got up and followed him *at once*. Levi was doing his duty as a tax collector. He was not the favorite person in the community. Jesus asked him to follow, he got up and he followed Jesus without counting his losses or his gains. Again there were no questions asked. Then Jesus found Phillip who not only followed him but asked Nathaniel to come and see the Lord. One by one twelve men joined the "band of disciples" who walked in the shadow of the master for the next three years. During that period he taught them the mysteries of God, proclaimed his mission and convinced them of their mission in life. With their eyes gazing at the heavens witnessing the departure of their master, they were assured that in the same way he was taken up to heaven he would return.

In *Lifestyle Evangelism*, Joe Aldrich tells a legend which recounts the return of Jesus to heaven. The angel Gabriel was perplexed at the way the salvation plan was carried and also skeptical of what was to follow. Jesus said, "I've asked Peter, James and John, and a few more friends to tell others about me. Those who are told will, in turn, tell

¹⁹ Matthew 4:19; Luke 1:17.

still other people, and my story will spread to the farthest reaches of the globe.

Ultimately, all of mankind will have heard about my life and what I have done.”²⁰ The disciples did just that and two thousand years later the gospel is still being preached.

The Apostle Paul’s Call

The Apostle Paul was one of the most creative and powerful communicators of the gospel in the New Testament. The first element of his skills came from the fact that he knew the Scripture and the traditions very well. He was confident about his knowledge and he acknowledged the source of authority behind the message being the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For Paul, doctrine was very important. In his admonitions to Timothy, he instructed him to guard and not tamper with the Word, fight corruption and false teachings and stand for truth. He advises Timothy to preach the whole counsel of God. A good and concise example are these words of Paul to Timothy:

As for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through Jesus Christ. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.²¹

A major factor of Paul’s efficiency in preaching was his constant awareness of his audience. He listened and observed their lives, passions and struggles and provided Scripture as a guide for living. In Damascus he “astonished” his audience and he “baffled the Jews living in Jerusalem proving that Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 9).

²⁰ Joe Aldrich, *Lifestyle Evangelism* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 1973), 15.

²¹ 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

The Necessity for Preaching: God's Call

It was said that Christianity is just one generation away from extinction, if there is no witness from those who call themselves Christians. Thinking about it with honesty, there is much truth to that. I might add that the extinction of Christianity can be a result of bad witnesses.

When I spoke with Dr. Dale Bruner about the status of preaching in America, he said he is encouraged by the fact that there are a great number of very good preachers who are precise in biblical interpretation, excellent in delivering the biblical messages and they have great influence in the communities in which they minister.

Fred Craddock, in *Preaching*, speaks about the projected role-model position a minister has in the community. Even if it is not stated, it is expected. Craddock bases his assumption on two factors. First is that “the minister works within an unusual network of trust and intimacy that makes separation of character from performance impossible,” and second, “all preaching is to some extent a self-disclosure by the preacher.”²²

The preacher is expected to have faith, passion, authority and grace. I would call these essential elements necessary for the activity of ordained ministry. In the ordination process in the Presbyterian Church (USA), the candidate has to take five ordination exams. What is intriguing is the content of these exams. The candidate must respond to a real life crisis situation from a biblical prospective, a reformed theological point of view and also pastorally. If you think that is extensive, please read the descriptions of the expectations churches have when seeking a pastor. It is not just effective preaching Search Committees are looking for. In some cases I found such descriptions acknowledging that, short of walking on water, they would expect everything. That is

²² Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 23.

honest and impossible! These expectations create hesitation on the part of individuals who feel called to ministry. The outcome of that expectation is causing a crisis in the pulpit.

God will never be left without witnesses. He calls out witnesses from all walks of life, with all kind of backgrounds, histories, life experiences, cultural traditions and intelligence. When I surrendered my life to Christ and responded to God's call to preach I wished I had a great testimony of how "God reached out and rescued me from the gates of Hell." I was envious of pastors who abandoned drugs or alcohol, those with stories of being in jail, and other traumas. I thought that was the real story. Then I discovered the grace of God in the same measure and I understood that God chooses whoever he wants and can turn anyone into a preacher. He did it and has continued to do it now for thousands of years. The main thing is to acknowledge that is God who does the calling and it is we who say, "Here we are, send us."

Preaching as a Spiritual Gift: God's Gift

Preaching is a life call. The person who does not commit to be a lifetime student of the Bible would do best not to start preaching. In comparison with other vocations, the preacher never gets away from work but every waking day is a getting "into daily work."²³ The sermon is the mode of delivery. Messages are collected in the daily routine stories written and shaped by the lives of people the preacher encounters every day. The sources of inspiration are the connections of the Scripture with life events.

Thomas Long raises the question of whether preaching can be learned. While there are very good preachers who seem to have an innate ability to preach without

²³ Craddock, *Preaching*, 71.

formal training, the truth is that “preaching requires study, practice, and hard work, but this does not mean that preaching is merely a matter of acquired technique.”²⁴

Thus far, we have defined the preacher as the herald of God’s Word. So it is with no doubt that the primary factor will be the divine call to preach and then the equipping to preach. As reflected in the Great Commission, the call is a gift that comes with the promise of divine anointing and inspiration.

The Apostle Paul writes to his devoted Timothy, “I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give you a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about the Lord.”²⁵

The gift of preaching is often misunderstood. Soon after the dust shakes from the clothes of the student exiting seminary with a degree in ministry, he or she is ready to fix the world. I say that because I have done the same. In my first year of ministry, I fell into the trenches of hardship and at times needed to cry to God for help. Very soon I realized I was not Billy Graham, Rick Warren or Haddon Robinson. Soon I discovered the reality of what preaching is. It is a gift from God that needs to be nurtured by disciplined study of the Word and Holy Spirit’s empowerment and delivery. It is a gift and because God gives it, he knows exactly what, where and when the gift is needed and how it is going to be used in his salvation plan.

The image takes me back to the moment when the disciples turned to each other and said, “Let’s go.” Simple fishermen, educated under the loving guidance of Christ their Master, take over the world with the gift given to them in their time of preparation

²⁴ Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 21.

²⁵ 2 Timothy 1:6-8.

for ministry. As you read the New Testament and see them in action, doubts are eliminated because you know they have a gift.

The Importance of Preaching: God's Plan

“Preaching brings the Scriptures forward as a living voice in the congregation.”²⁶

During worship, the living Word of God proclaimed with clarity, accuracy, passion and conviction brings the longing of the soul into a personal encounter with the living God. God is personal and intimate to the longing soul. The preaching secures the meeting of the two.

In *The Preacher's Heritage, Task, and Resources*, Ralph Turnbull suggests a list of aims for preaching which describe God's plan for preaching and elevates its importance. First aim is the *conversion of the hearer*. The reality is that God, in a mysterious way, accesses the heart of a person and through the hearing of Scripture the soul is quickened into accepting Christ. A good example of the Word causing conversion and repentance is the response of the audience after Peter's preaching in Acts 2:38, “When the people heard this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles ‘Brothers what shall we do?’ ” Peter's response urged them to repent and be baptized. The message of repentance was proclaimed by John the Baptist in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is near.”²⁷

The second aim is the *healing of the soul*. Healing happens when the grace of God meets the remorseful sinner. The Scripture says, “Gracious words are a honeycomb,

²⁶ Craddock, *Preaching*, 29.

²⁷ Matthew 3:2.

sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”²⁸ Life experiences get us into struggles with anxiety, depression and frustration. Messages of forgiveness, grace and wholeness bring comfort to the people in the pews. Modern day pastors increasingly challenged with a growing need for pastoral counseling and involvement with the parishioner’s personal struggles. The pulpit ministry has to be connected with the daily life of the people in the pews.

The third aim of preaching is the *nurture of faith*. Christian life is marked by growth. The Apostle Paul speaks about the spiritual food which should nurture us onto maturity. He writes to the church in Ephesus, “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”²⁹ Growth into maturity was important for Paul.

The fourth aim is *the worship of the congregation*. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) stated that, “The church confesses the Scriptures to be the Word of God written, witnessing to God’s self-revelation. Where the Word is read and proclaimed, Jesus Christ the Living Word is present by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, the reading, preaching, and confessing of the Word are central to Christian worship.”³⁰

The fifth aim is *interpretation of the truth*. When Jesus was praying shortly before his arrest, he identified the role of the Word in the life of the believer, “They are not of

²⁸ Proverbs 16:24.

²⁹ Ephesians 4:11-13.

³⁰ *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 2011-2013*, Section W-2.2001, 88.

the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth.”³¹ The word of God is a word of truth that serves for guidance and fulfillment of God’s plan. The aims of preaching are following God’s plan in the life of the sinner from the point of conversion until the final revelation of His glory, a future event awaited by those who long in expectation, the fullness of time, when Christ will come again.

The Act of Preaching: God’s Act

In *The Preacher’s Portrait*, John Stott recognizes the fact that while

we must spend time studying our text with painstaking thoroughness, meditating on it, wrestling with it, worrying at it like a dog with a bone, until it yields its meaning; and sometimes this process will be accomplished by toils and tears. . . . We must indeed do the thinking, but it is God who gives understanding.³²

God must be behind every act of preaching. The preacher is the tool and God acts his Word using the human tool for his glory. What stands the test of time is not the preacher, but the One behind the message. Throughout the Old and New Testament this is revealed to convince us that God speaks through the messenger. Let’s look at some examples.

In Nehemiah 10 we find a large gathering of people from the whole territory of Israel. They are there for a binding agreement to follow God and be obedient.

The rest of the people—priests, Levites, gatekeepers, musicians, temple servants and all who separated themselves from the neighboring peoples for the sake of the Law of God, together with their wives and all their sons and daughters who are able to understand—all these now join their fellow Israelites the nobles, and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the LORD our Lord. “We promise not to . . .” “we will not buy . . .” “We assume the responsibility for carrying out the commands . . .” We also assume

³¹ John 17:16-17.

³² John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 31.

responsibility for bringing to the house of the LORD each year the first fruits of our crops and of every fruit tree. As it is also written in the Law, we will bring the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, of our herds and of our flocks to the house of our God, to the priests ministering there.³³

People engaged in action dictated by the understanding that God acted out his plan, giving the Law to Moses. It was through Moses, he engaged the hearts of his people.

Moving into the New Testament narrative we find in Acts 19:11 that “God did extraordinary miracles through Paul” when he was ministering in Ephesus. Paul was present and available for God to do His bidding with his life.

In his whole ministry we find Paul acknowledging God as the source of all he did, even in his preaching. An example is his writing to the church in Corinth.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.” Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For, since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.³⁴

These are humbling words. Paul gave up the credentials he had. He gave up the human understanding of God and pursued a new understanding, inspired and given through the Holy Spirit. God called him, gifted him, presented his plan for him, and acted through him; we find Paul rising up and declaring with confidence, “We are therefore Christ’s

³³ Nehemiah 10:28-36.

³⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:18-25.

ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."³⁵

The Authority of Preaching: God's Power

The Apostle Paul opens his letter to the church in Rome by saying, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile."³⁶ Having God as the source of power, the authority behind it makes it stand under any tests and trials.

Every time I think about the authority of the preaching event, I am reminded of the story related in Acts 19, when the Apostle Paul was in Ephesus, preaching and teaching.

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.³⁷

For two amazing years, Paul had a great ministry. At times he was rejected in public, yet daily he had his time of proclaiming the gospel and the province of Asia was saturated with the Word.

"God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the

³⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:20.

³⁶ Romans 1:16.

³⁷ Acts 19:8-10.

evil spirits left them.”³⁸ This practice was done in Romanian churches and I personally witnessed these kinds of actions initiated by pastors and lay ministers. While I am not ready to deny such practice, I will say that they do not take the place of good solid, sound preaching.

The proclamation of the Word of God was demonstrated in the miracles of conversions and healing in the whole region. Imagine the scenes! There was intense preaching, prayers, laying on of hands and anointing of the messengers. Handkerchiefs, aprons, whatever could be touched were brought to Paul to pray over. Imagine a mother rushing to her sick child and with a piece of cloth that would make her baby well. It was that small piece of cloth that gave her reason to believe that what Paul said was true. Knowing Paul, you easily discern that the emphasis was not in the cloth, but in the message.

What struck me in the story is what follows. I would like to address the issue of the power of God in the witness of the gospel.

The preaching should be Christ-centered. According to John Piper, the cross gives validity and humility in preaching. “Man-centered humans are amazed that God should withhold life and joy from his creatures. But the God-centered Bible is amazed that God should withhold judgment from sinners.”³⁹ Preaching brings sinners to the foot of the cross and to the display of God’s amazing grace through the sacrifice of his only Son. Both the preacher and his audience are humbled and their pride is broken. That humility allows God to shine his glory into a sinful world.

³⁸ Acts 19:11-12.

³⁹ Piper, *Supremacy of God in Preaching*, 34.

In the first chapter of *Mastering Contemporary Preaching*, Haddon Robinson tackles the subject of the preacher's authority. Acknowledging that many pastors struggle with the issue of authority, Robinson identifies six guidelines. First is articulating *unexpected feelings*. This is a perspective through which the preacher identifies with the experiences of the listeners. "When some areas of the speaker's life overlap with the listeners', they are more likely to listen."⁴⁰ The second guideline is *connecting with the "invisible congregation."* In this approach, while preparing the sermon the preacher mentally forms a group of individuals from the congregation which represent the variety of the people seated in the pews every Sunday. Preparing the sermon with them in mind helps for an effective and practical sermon. In the preparation of my second project for the DMin. program, I had such a group which actively met with me. We prepared a few sermons together. The time leading to, the delivery and after the delivery I sensed a great connection with the group and the whole audience as their needs were addressed through the spoken word. The third guideline is *to admit complexity of life situations*.

Communication with authority implies willingness to tackle hard subjects and honesty to accept difficulties and complexity. Robinson makes a distinction between motives and behavior. "As far as I know, the Bible never calls any action, in itself right. No action is right apart from its motive. Obviously, there are some acts the Bible calls wrong behavior: murder, lying, adultery. But it's not easy to classify right behavior."⁴¹ The fourth guideline is *speaking with authority*. It is not authoritarian but authority derived from the Word of God. It is the prophet's declaration, "Thus saith the Lord," and the preacher's affirmation "the Bible says." In the example of the apostle Paul in the

⁴⁰ Bill Hybels, Stuart Briscoe, and Haddon Robinson, *Mastering Contemporary Preaching* (Portland, Ore.: Multnomah, 1989), 18.

⁴¹ Hybels, Briscoe, and Robinson, *Mastering Contemporary Preaching*, 22.

preaching there is power, boldness and not shame and hesitation. The fifth guideline is on *being precise and truthful* about facts. Accuracy of definitions and descriptions builds credibility. Distorting facts will lose credibility and the attention of the audience. The last guideline is *displaying character*. This is very important because the Christian community's credibility comes through how they perceive the pastor's character.

Lay Preaching: The "Priesthood of All Believers"

There is no doubt that the ministry of preaching was never just the obligation and activity of ordained ministers. The Southern Baptist Convention affirms the priesthood of all believers in one of their position statements:

We affirm the priesthood of all believers. Laypersons have the same right as ordained ministers to communicate with God, interpret Scripture, and minister in Christ's name. That is why the Convention requires strong lay involvement on its boards. This doctrine is first and foremost a matter of responsibility and servanthood, not privilege and license.⁴²

There are other denominations with similar positions. In some cases extensive lay preaching was dictated by the lack of resources and training opportunities. Growing up in Romania, I attended many churches where they did not have an ordained minister and the task of preaching was taken up by men who loved the Lord, knew how to read the Bible and got excited about what they were reading. Training of preachers was not possible because of the anti-religion government. Access to Bibles was possible only from those who had to smuggle them into the country. Sunday after Sunday, lay preachers rose before audiences in churches, house gatherings, secret places, in the forests and on mountaintops to proclaim, 'Thus saith the Lord.'

⁴² Southern Baptist Convention, "Priesthood of All Believers," <http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/pspriesthood.asp> (accessed April 23, 2012), n.p.

Even after over twenty years since the fall of communism, there is still a lot of lay preaching done in Romania. In my twenty years of mission work among the church leaders, I have discovered a greater ordained ministry presence in churches all across the country. Yet there are still many ministers who have the responsibility of ministry in more than three and in some case up to ten churches. Seeing that need elevates the urgency of lay training, as Richard Ramesh points out:

Extensive international preaching opportunities exposed me to large audiences of pastors and church leaders who have to minister weekly and often to multiple congregations. They have little or no formal training on preaching but must preach. They are called, gifted, and appointed to the task. Was there any way I could take the process to them. Was there a simplified and cross-culturally adaptable sermon preparation process applicable across literary genres and literacy levels that could be imparted to them?⁴³

Romania needs lay preachers who will get exposure and training in sermon preparation. From the interviews, as well as from my personal observation, this is an urgent need. The consensus is that the fall communism and the open influence of western culture created a culture shift. People are more knowledgeable, there is a plethora of information and the globalization of the world changed the way people think. The old ways do not work any longer, as Zack Eswine writes:

Generations are complex. A post-everything world is saturated with multiple contexts and cultural assumptions. Some contexts raise questions about space stations, human cloning, domestic partnerships, and postmodernism. Others face issues regarding refugee camps, the bombing of our churches, going without food, dying of AIDS, or protecting our families from genocide or child slavery. Some to whom we preach cheat in school by using text messaging. Others practice voodoo. Some preach the gospel within each of these contexts.⁴⁴

⁴³ Richard Ramesh, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 11.

⁴⁴ Zack Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World: Crafting Biblical Sermons That Connect with Our Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2008), 12-13.

The complexity of the world and the rapid change of the Romanian culture and society have created a shock wave felt in churches. There was a sense of urgency. In the late 1990s the cry of the church leaders was, "People are hungry and turn their lives to God. Our churches are full and we do not have trained ministers to respond to the need. Come and teach us how to preach."

While it is true that the preaching event happens at the pulpit in front of an audience; it is also true that each member of each congregation is called to the task of preaching in some way.

As people leave the parking lot of one of the Southern California Presbyterian churches, there is a one-sided plaque they cannot miss. The message is, "You are now entering the mission field."

The Scripture makes a clear case for the need and role of the priesthood of all believers in 1 Peter 2:9-10:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

We are God's special possession and we are called to declare the praises of God. He called us out from the darkness of sin and now we are heirs with Christ for the eternal Kingdom.

The Book of Revelation describes the praise of the twenty-four elders and the living creatures around God's throne praising the Lamb who with his blood "purchased

for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”⁴⁵

Necessary Training in Constructing Expository Sermons

In my interview of the Romanian pastors and church leaders, one of the most common comments was the need for training the preachers in expository preaching. For a very long time preaching was done by common people who loved the Lord, read the Bible and wanted to speak about their understanding of it. They were sincere and with the best of intention to communicate God’s Word. The problem is that there were many misconceptions about the act of preaching and sermon preparation. I am sure that such misconceptions are not specific to the Romanian churches and some readers might identify this problem in their own churches regardless of nationality. With no intention to dampen the great ministries of the churches all across Romania I would like to state a few of these misconceptions as they were related to me by church leaders as well some of my personal observations. What is important is that there is a serious consideration given to arriving at a correct and precise interpretation of Scripture and that the Good News be proclaimed with confidence challenging the fences raised by unbelief, especially during the era of government dictatorship.

First, Scripture was taken out of context. May I say that anything out of context can be misleading? Context gives meaning and background for proper interpretation of facts. Scripture interpretation requires the context for precision in interpretation. A. P Gibbs writes, “Just like a gem is enhanced by its settings, so the text of the Scripture will scintillate with spiritual significance when interpreted in relationship with its context.

⁴⁵ Revelation 5:9-10.

Many questions could be asked in regard to the text, all of which are calculated to throw light on it.”⁴⁶ Questions of the text are required to determine who made the statement, to whom it was made, the circumstances, time, place and purpose of it. This process is also called the investigation of the text.

The second misconception I witnessed during my visiting and attending Romanian churches was their not having a proper understanding of the original author’s intent. In the history of preaching in Romania, no one is to be blamed for this. The preachers did not have access to seminary education and resources for biblical interpretation. There were no biblical dictionaries, Christian books, biblical language studies or publication on theological studies. The only sources to feed the churches were illegal Bibles smuggled into the country by devout missionaries. Yet in a mysterious way God, sustained and protected his church, frequently through the simplicity of peasants with second and third grade reading level. In this way, the message was passed from one generation to another.

The third misconception is not giving attention to cultural differences. This is very important! When the preacher investigates the text, a proper understanding of culture, traditions, historical background and economic life of the events in the Biblical narrative must be considered. We should ask questions about an individual’s behavior and actions in the story.

As I am developing a curriculum for the equipping of preachers, this needs to be considered. The gospel is heard through filters. Each listener hears it differently and reacts in his or her unique way. This raises the importance of knowing the audience.

⁴⁶ Alfred P. Gibbs, *The Preacher and His Preaching* (Dubuque, Iowa: ECS Ministries, 2002), 149.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter the focus will be on scholastic materials on the subject of preaching. I will also analyze interviews of people who are involved in preaching ministry with focus on church planting and mission work. The written materials will be divided into sections focused on hermeneutics and homiletics and on teaching. I will give a brief summary of the content of the book with emphasis on the material most useful for the preaching curriculum. Due to the fact that some of the books are not available for the students who will take the course, I will write a little more extensive description of the book, just enough to give the background and the author's insight into the subject. These resources are a significant part of the material which will be covered in chapter 4.

Books about Hermeneutics and Homiletics

Audience Adaptations in the Sermons and Speeches of Paul by Jay Adams provides a great insight in Paul's ability to adapt his sermons and speeches to the variety of audiences he addressed.¹ Adams provides us with his observations studying Paul's sermons in the synagogue in Antioch,² his sermon to the townspeople of Lystra,³ his sermon to the Greek philosophers of Athens⁴ and the farewell sermon to the Christian elders at Miletus.⁵ He also gives us insight into Paul's speeches before the hostile mob in

¹ Jay E. Adams, *Audience Adaptations in the Sermons and Speeches of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976).

² Acts 13:13-43.

³ Acts 14:6-16.

⁴ Acts 17:16-34.

⁵ Acts 20:16-38.

Jerusalem,⁶ defense before the Sanhedrin,⁷ defense before Felix,⁸ and the hearing before Festus and Agrippa.⁹

In chapter 3, on pages 6 and 7, we are given two checklists for audience analysis and modes of adaptation, which I found very helpful. Adams took these lists from *First Principles of Public Speaking* by Loren Reid.

Check List for Audience Analysis

1. Size?
2. Occasion for gathering?
3. Significant environmental factors?
4. Customs and taboos?
5. Nationalities?
6. Races?
7. Homogeneity?
8. Parties (political or otherwise)?
9. Organization?
10. Trades, business, professions?
11. Education?
12. Social level?
13. Economic level?
14. Religions?

⁶ Acts 21:27–22:22.

⁷ Acts 23:1–11.

⁸ Acts 24:1–27.

⁹ Acts 25:13–26:32.

15. Interests, hopes, fears, needs?
16. Attitudes towards the subject?
17. Attitudes toward the speaker?

Check List for Modes of Adaptation

1. Topic (central idea)?
2. Structure (type of approach)?
3. Materials (where obtained)?
4. Content?
5. Arrangements?
6. General style?
7. Identification?
8. Language?
9. Introduction?
10. Conclusion?
11. Persuasive appeal?
12. Personal application?
13. Reasoning?
14. Personal experience, testimony?
15. Quotations, analogies, illustrations?
16. Figurative speech?
17. Authority?

These are comprehensive lists and need to serve as maps for approach, interpretation of the text as well as delivery of the sermon after a careful consideration of the audience.

Although it is an older book, the description of the phases of sermon preparation Andrew W. Blackwood's *The Preparation of Sermons* is detailed and similar to a lot of contemporary writing.¹⁰ The author starts with introducing the role of the preacher as "the noblest work on earth." For some reason that struck my heart and it will serve as an encouragement to my future ministry. It was fascinating to discover that the starting point for a sermon is the moment of ministry that involves a non-pulpit event. The preacher observes the needs of the people in his congregation, hears their struggles, passions and longings and out of that experience the Holy Spirit of God guides the preacher to search for answers in the Scriptures. That search leads to a text.

Blackwood follows the path from the conception to the delivery of the sermon. The focus is on the diligent work of the preacher to develop the message with a transformational impact into the lives of the people in the pews.

Exegetical work is hard. It takes time, inspiration and resources to find the gems hidden in the biblical text. D. A. Carson's *Exegetical Fallacies* helps us understand possible traps in our exegetical work.¹¹ He calls them exegetical fallacies and points to the fact that "they are painfully frequent among us—whose God-given grace and responsibility is the faithful proclamation of the Word of God."¹²

Carson lists the following possible fallacies.

¹⁰ Andrew W. Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1948).

¹¹ D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984).

¹² Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 12.

Fallacies of word interpretation are very frequent. The list is quite comprehensive and includes the root fallacy, semantic anachronism, semantic obsolescence, appeal to unknown or unlikely meanings, careless appeal to background material, false assumptions about technical meanings, problems surrounding synonyms and componential analysis, selective and prejudicial use of evidence, and problems relating to the Semitic background of the Greek New Testament. Reading over this list many of the preachers today will remember these infractions.

The chapter on grammatical fallacies is technical and points to the changes in language which create errors in interpretation. “Languages breakdown with time: the syntax becomes less structured, the number of exceptions increases, the morphology is simplified, and so forth.”¹³

The author points to the difference between the grammar of the classical Greek and the Greek New Testament. The structure of the first cannot be applied to the latter.

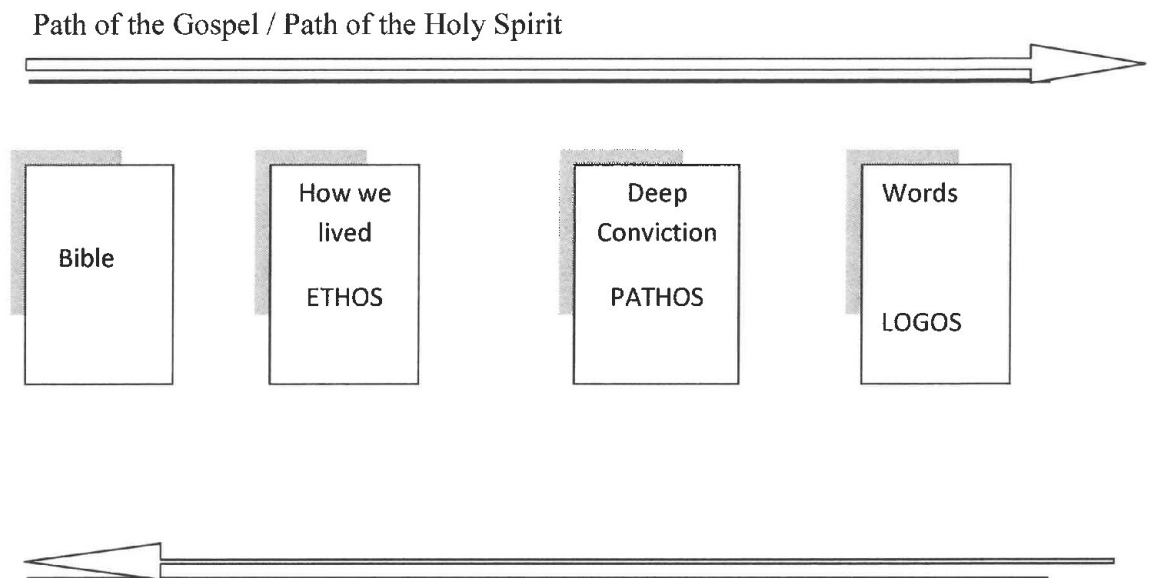
The author’s list of logical fallacies includes failure to recognize distinctions, appeal to selective evidence, and improper use of syllogisms, world-view confusion and emotive appeals. The question is how many times such mistakes are made by the preacher in the pulpit leaving the people in the pews puzzled by what the message was.

Bryan Chapell’s textbook, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, is a comprehensive resource with great detailed materials which can be used in the process of formation and improvement of sermon delivery.¹⁴ Information specific to phases of sermon preparation will be observed in a later part of this study.

¹³ Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 68.

¹⁴ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1994).

Thinking of the source of inspiration and the path of the gospel message, the author gives us a very useful illustration of the path of the gospel (see fig. 1):



Path of the Listener

Figure 1. Path of the Gospel

This is the illustration of 1 Thessalonians 1:5, “Our gospel came to you not simply through words (logos), but also with power, and with deep conviction (pathos). You know how we lived (ethos) among you for your sake.”¹⁵

The main obligations of the sermon are: unity and the provision of responses to the questions of the audience. The questions are: What is the author talking about and what is he saying about what he is talking about? These are key elements in the thinking, processing and formulation of the expository sermon.

¹⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 35.

The Fallen Condition Focus (FCF) is a new concept I learned from this book. FCF is the mutual human condition that contemporary believers share with those to or about whom the text was written that requires the grace of the passage for God's people to glorify and enjoy him.¹⁶ The audience's understanding of a message requires a careful study of the passage and that can be accomplished only after the formation of a clear FCF.

All Scripture is redemptive revelation. The message of the gospel addresses the fallen condition of humanity and how that is met through the provision of Christ. Preaching is transmitting that truth to the hearts of the people in the pews by the means of Christ-centered preaching.

As stated in the preface of this book, Fred B. Craddock's intent in *Preaching* was to write a book "that will walk the reader through the process of preaching, from selection of a text to the delivery of the sermon."¹⁷ The book starts with a look at the preacher, the listeners, the Scripture, and the Holy Spirit as part of this whole picture of the proclamation of the gospel.

An important fact in the success of preaching ministry lies in the life and discipline of studying God's word. Craddock shines an honest ray of light on the importance of carving study time in the busy schedule of a minister. Study is an act of obedience, worship and a homiletical act. He speaks about hindrances and provides suggestions for change. I found this section of the book useful for my own ministry, and it challenged me to make some changes. After describing the life and practices of the

¹⁶ Chappell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 50.

¹⁷ Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985).

preacher, Craddock focuses on the process of sermon formation from the selection of the text to the delivery of the message.

Ilion T. Jones's *Principles and Practice of Preaching* is a comprehensive treatment of the subject of preaching.¹⁸ Jones starts with a look at the importance of preaching, builds on steps to plan and prepare the sermons, presents the delivery methods and concludes with some suggestions for maintaining a great resource pool for ongoing preaching ministry. References to this book will surface in chapter 4 as part of the curriculum material.

Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible by Thomas G. Long was helpful in understanding the need for the sermons to be composed with consideration of specific interpretation of different literary forms of the Bible.¹⁹

Literary forms of the texts are means for communication and consist of stories, songs, jokes, and questions. We gather information as we hear people talk around us, as we open the newspapers and we engage others in conversation. As we engage in communication, the words we use to introduce our intent create an expectation on the part of the hearers and our intent is met with a guess. When we say, "Once upon a time," the hearer expects a story. And when we say, "Dear Paul," the assumption is the introduction to a letter. In the introduction of our speech, we are to be careful about shocking the audience with overpowering or misleading expectations. One particular time, preaching from Luke on the Parable of the Prodigal Son, I introduced my sermon with the statement, "I hate my father!" A few weeks later, someone from my congregation was still wondering why I hated my dad. It made me think that I did not

¹⁸ Ilion T. Jones, *Principles and Practice of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956).

¹⁹ Thomas G. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989).

follow up with a convincing explanation of my introductory statement and I had created a false expectation.

In *The Witness of Preaching*, Long starts with a focus on what the preaching activity means and involves, then switches to a close look at the message.²⁰ I appreciated how Long looks at the preacher from different angles. He sees the preacher as the herald, the pastor and the storyteller. As he describes the preaching event he looks at the focus and function of the sermon in worship. A good section of the books focuses on exegetical aspects of the sermon how it comes together, the basic form of the sermon, beginnings, transitions and conclusions.

Haddon W. Robinson's textbook, *Biblical Preaching*,²¹ was a major part of my own studies of preaching, and I plan to refer to it extensively in chapter 4 of this curriculum. This textbook was translated into Romanian allowing me to assign some reading to the Romanian students.

The reality of modern times is that there is a loss of status in the role the preacher in our society. We are liked and respected in some ways but when it comes to intellectual evaluation, preachers are not very high in public esteem. There is a great appeal to social actions at the cost of a lesser value placed on preaching. Preaching is defined as crying out in the proclamation of the Word of God to the people who are lost in their sin and need to come to a saving faith in Christ. The delivery of the message needs passion and authority. A preacher can have passion, the authority comes from God!

The sad reality is that in some cases, the biblical passage is like the national anthem being played at the beginning of a game and then not resurfacing during the

²⁰ Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989).

²¹ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2001).

service.²² This is a reality I observed on several occasions when I visited churches. There were occasions where the passage was read right before the sermon and it was not brought into the delivery at all. That indicates a low view of Scripture and is an insult to and ignorance of God's command to preach the Word.

One idea! One central idea! One simple idea! One sentence! This is the hallmark of this textbook. Understanding this concept will lead to a sermon that will have lasting impact on the audience. To be remembered, a sermon should be simple and sophisticated at the same time. The simplicity will be like the telling of a story to a child. Sophistication comes from an understanding of world views. "One Idea" preaching will achieve that.

As in Paul's instruction to Timothy, sermons need to confront, convict, convert and comfort the audience. The skills of the preacher are limited, yet the true source of authority is the Holy Spirit. A good sermon leaves the audience wondering how the preacher knew all about them. That is the evidence of the Holy Spirit connecting the hearer to the message.

Materials covering the stages of preparation are detailed and very useful and I will use them as a guide to the writing in chapter 4, containing the curriculum for the classroom studies.

Combined with the class instructions I experienced studying with Dr. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching* played a major part in my understanding of the task of preaching.²³ The book calls us to take a close look at God's Word through the study of the passage, asking questions of the text, looking for the timeless truth and finding its

²² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 22.

²³ Donald R. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth with Clarity and Relevance* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007).

relevancy for the contemporary audience. Having great details on the steps of sermon preparation, I will use several sections in the development of the curriculum in chapter 4.

Richard Ramesh's *Preparing Expository Sermons* is a simple yet comprehensive presentation of methods of sermon preparation.²⁴ The material of this book has been tested in national and international contexts. The author has traveled extensively presenting seminars, training pastors and church leaders.

From the choosing of the text, the author makes the case for a seven-step method of action needed for a successful preparation and delivery of a good sermon. He calls the process "sculpting Scripture."²⁵ The steps are:

1. Studying the text. This is the stage of seeing and seeking what the text is saying.
2. Structuring the text. This represents the skeleton of the text and shows how the biblical author put the text together.
3. The central proposition of the text, which represents the heart of the text or the dominant teaching of the text. This corresponds to the questions for the theme and the thrust of the text:
 - a. The Theme: What is the author talking about?
 - b. The Thrust: What is the author saying about what he is talking about?
4. The purpose of the sermon, and this is the brain of the sermon and addresses the relevancy of the sermon.
5. The central position of the sermon, which is the heart of the sermon.

²⁴ Richard Ramesh, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995).

²⁵ Ramesh, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 25.

6. Structuring the sermon is the step that identifies the ways of developing the sermon with unity, order and progress.
7. Preaching the sermon with concern for the audience and physical delivery with effectiveness and clarity.

“To stand in the pulpit unprepared- with little forethought- and deliver a message off the top of your head is not worthy of the Savior you represent,” write Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix in *Power in the Pulpit*.²⁶ I want to carve this on the sacristy door so it will serve as a fresh reminder of my call to be a student of the Bible and a preacher of the Word. The preaching of the Word of God must have the anointing. “Nothing is as exhilarating as preaching when the Spirit’s anointing is evident.”²⁷ The anointing is not to be evident at the moment of the preaching event but it is a daily, steady walk in communion with God. E. M. Bounds said, “This anointing comes to the preacher not in the study but in the closet.” “The preacher must know intimately the Author of the message he proclaims.”²⁸ Before we speak a Word, people must have all the conviction that we live a life of obedience to our Lord and know our passion for Him. I think that my congregation looks at me first before they hear the message I bring.

The development of the preacher refers to the qualities of the heart, cleanliness of the mind, faithfulness to the Lord and a good physical condition. I learned through this reading that I must focus at resolving any pollution of the heart, feed my mind with the Word of God and maintain good health through regular physical exercise. I must admit

²⁶ Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999), 35.

²⁷ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 66.

²⁸ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 59, citing E. M. Bounds.

that my first challenge was to see the priority of my health and *find* the time to address it through adopting a more disciplined attitude towards exercising regularly. It was and it is not easy because of the demands placed on me by the way my ministry is set-up, yet I am making good progress accomplishing the goals I have set.

In approaching a biblical text we need to consider the four “I’s” for analyzing the text: Instigation, Investigation, Interpretation and Implication. Each step has detailed information and steps to follow as we discover the message of each text. It was good to follow the approaches of the text we studied before by answering the questions: What does the text says? Is it true? If it is true, what difference does it make? That is why I loved this book. Every text has the CIT “central idea of the text.” Once the analysis of the text has been accomplished, there is the need to identify the CIT. Knowing the CIT will lead to the proposition of the text which is the application of the CIT to the contemporary context. Knowing the proposition, the preacher has to be able to articulate a brief statement of what he or she wants to accomplish in the life of his or her listeners as they are hearing this particular message.²⁹

After all that is done, the preacher designs the *road map* of the sermon. The structure of the sermon should be crafted in such way that the hearers will stay ON in the journey to the desired destination. In this case, understand the Word of God as spoken to their particular needs at that particular place. A clear design gives structure, guidance, unity and arrangement to the sermon. An effective sermon design has four phases: identification, clarification, reiteration and transition.³⁰

²⁹ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 130-33.

³⁰ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 151.

My wife's criticism on my sermons when I say too much is the most honest feedback I can rely on in my ministry. As a guide for not saying too much, the content question makes sense: Is this information necessary or extremely helpful in supporting the proposition of the sermon? This is a good test. The question is not only in the quantity, but also the quality of the information. A prime indication of the quality in communication is in the capacity of the audience to understand and apply the truths spoken by the preacher.

A very comprehensive book on the subject of preaching is *The Preacher and His Preaching* by Alfred P. Gibbs.³¹ In a large part of the introductory chapters, Gibbs focuses on the qualifications of the preacher. After that he looks at the necessity for preaching. I use the material from the first eight chapters of the book in chapter 2 of my thesis. Chapter 10 focuses on the perils of the preacher. This section is very practical and true. The rest of the book is about sermon preparation and delivery and follows mostly the pattern from other resources I am using. This section will be used in chapter 4 of my thesis. The last chapter is on public prayer.

Best Advice by William J. Carl III contains just that, best advice.³² The book is a collection and reflections from well-known preachers and teachers of the Bible. Here are some examples.

Ronald J Allen encourages us to listen to what the congregation says about preaching. We are urged to listen to "what a biblical text, Christian doctrine, or practice invites the congregation to believe and do; the context of the congregation – the culture, issues, feelings, and other dynamics at work both in the congregation and the larger social

³¹ Alfred P. Gibbs, *The Preacher and His Preaching* (Dubuque, Iowa: ECS Ministries, 2002).

³² William J. Carl III, *Best Advice: Wisdom on Ministry from 30 Leading Pastors and Preachers* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

world; their own personal and social experience- their history, what is happening to them at the moment, their own hopes and fears and questions; and other sources of insight (such as philosophy, the arts, political analysis, sociology, and psychology).”³³

Craig Barnes writes about the three temptations of the preachers as being: the temptation to be full, the temptation to be certain and the temptation to make a deal with the Devil. Although these advices need some explanation, the certainty lies in the fact that they’re true. At times, a preacher can feel empty, lacking self confidence, and tempted to compromise.

Carl himself writes about preaching in a church where the culture needs to change. At first he addresses the reality of dysfunctional congregations and how the culture can be changed from within by healthy rules like: no secrets, no surprises, no subversions but the provision of lots of support.

Jana Childers writes about finding power to preach when you are exhausted. This is an experience from which no pastor is exempt.

Other contributors are Fred B. Craddock, Thomas G. Long, Jennifer Lord, John S. McClure, Earl Palmer, Eugene Peterson, Marguerite Shuster and Leanne Van Dyke.

The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments by C. H. Dodds is an older publication and contains three lectures.³⁴ My attention was captured by the title of the first lecture, “The Primitive Preaching.” “The more we try to penetrate in imagination to the state of mind of the first Christians in the earliest days the more are we driven to think of resurrection, exaltation, and second advent as being, in their belief, inseparable parts of a single divine advent. It was not an *early* advent that they proclaimed, but an *immediate*

³³ Carl, *Best Advice*, 7.

³⁴ C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962).

advent.”³⁵ The reality is that throughout the ages the proclamation of the gospel was done with the advent of Christ’s return as an immediate possibility.

The other two lectures focuses on the preaching in the gospels and the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul as recorded in the Book of Acts.

Pastoral sensitivity and simplicity in preaching are important aspects of preaching, as Zach Eswine explains in *Preaching to a Post-Everything World*.³⁶ A preacher must know the people’s hurts, prepare the messages with them in mind and preach in ways that give answers to common rationalities. “Simplism sings songs to a troubled heart.”³⁷

Eswine calls Bryan Chapell’s Fallen Condition Focus (FCF) “the mutual human condition that contemporary believers share with those to or about whom the text was written that requires the grace of the passage for God’s people to glorify and enjoy Him.”³⁸ He continues by expanding the FCF as it describes the state of the fallen world in four ways: Fallen Condition, Finite Condition, Fragile Condition, and Faltering Condition.

Fallen Condition identifies our tendencies toward temptation and evil. Finite Condition identifies the human limits and the fact that we need to live with our limited knowledge, understanding, emotional capacity and physical ability. Fragile Condition exposes our mental and physical limitation and propensity for frailty. Faltering Condition

³⁵ Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching and Its Development*, 33.

³⁶ Zack Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World: Crafting Biblical Sermons That Connect with Our Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2008).

³⁷ Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World*, 39.

³⁸ Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World*, 45.

gives us a framework for the tension that exists in each individual. This is most important for the biblically uninformed audience.³⁹

Biblical preaching must address three important questions: What kinds of people in our community do we exclude from sitting with us and hearing our sermons? What life situations must people overcome before we allow them to hear our sermons? What geographical environments do we exclude from our preaching?⁴⁰ This is very important to me. My church is in a neighborhood that is challenging and diverse. There are many people who need to hear the message of salvation. They look and are different than typical Sunday morning worshipers at our church. How do I take the message to them and allow them to feel welcomed in our church? A question for the pastor and the Session!

God preaches to the cultures that challenge us!⁴¹ As a pastor I see the preference of our members to have the church care for our needs and be protective of our ways and comfort. Opening the church to others makes us vulnerable! The book helped me to think about my audience as I prepare to preach. The most important truth and insight is that God is the Hero of every text!

The postmodern age is an image-rich age! As we tell the Gospel story, the ultimate goal is to take the audience into the story!

In our days there is not much preaching on the topic of Hell. Chapter 12 of this book has a very insightful take on that topic. Because the idea of Hell arouses negative emotions, preachers avoid it. Yet it is important that the congregation know its reality. The starting point is allowing the Bible to lead the way.

³⁹ Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World*, 46-47.

⁴⁰ Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World*, 80.

⁴¹ Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World*, 108.

The reading of this book gave me more insights into the preparation of sermons a deeper awareness of the role of understanding the audience, and the importance of cultural discernment as my ministry is becoming increasingly diverse.

John Piper's *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* is a short read with an exhorting message for the preacher.⁴² While pointing to the supremacy of preaching, Piper defines the goal, the ground, the gift and the gravity and gladness of preaching as essential for a Christ-centered message. Piper finds support for the supremacy of preaching in the life and ministry of Jonathan Edwards. Sections of this book will be used in chapter 4 of my thesis.

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth is easy to read and very informative.⁴³ The chapters give us insight to specific books and sections of the Bible.

The Epistles. The one thing that all epistles have in common is that all are occasional documents written in some special circumstances. They are called occasional documents and they are all from the first century.⁴⁴ The first thing we need to do when reading the epistles is try to figure out what the author wrote about and try to reconstruct it. To accomplish that, we need to read the text more than one time by itself and also in its context. After gaining knowledge of the context, we need to ask the proper question of the text, i.e. what is the author talking about?

When asking the hermeneutical questions, we need to pay attention to some basic rules which are often ignored. The first basic rule of the text is that it cannot have a different meaning from what the author intended. The second rule is that there are

⁴² John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990).

⁴³ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stewart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982).

⁴⁴ Fee and Stewart, *How to Read the Bible*, 58.

transcendent truths we share with the first century Christians, and God's Word to us is the same as His Word to them.

Old Testament narratives. Forty percent of the Old Testament is narrative.

Narratives are stories retelling the historical Biblical events which present interest to a particular group of people in a particular time and place.⁴⁵ A narrative is not an allegory. It does not have hidden meaning and the narrator has complete control of the story. The preacher should stay true to the plot. Every story must have a plot. There are some cautions to be considered when preaching the narratives. They are allegorizing instead of concentrating on the meaning of the narrative, de-contextualization, selectivity, personalizing, misappropriating, false application, false combination, and redefinition.

Acts. The authors call our attention to the fact that the stories of the Book of Acts are history and we need to treat the book as history. Discovering and knowing the events of the first century church calls for an answer to the crucial hermeneutical question, Does what happened in the early church happen in the church today?

Discussing the hermeneutics in the Book of Acts, the author describes three general doctrinal statements derived from the Scripture: Christian theology (what Christian believe), Christian ethics (how Christians ought to live) and Christian experience (what Christians must do). These doctrinal statements dictate divisions among the churches.

The Gospels. Having four Gospels is important. They are books about Jesus coming from four different Christian communities and have four different angles. To compile them into one story will take away from the richness of the story. The Gospels are not biographies even though they are partly biographical depicting events from the

⁴⁵ Fee and Stewart, *How to Read the Bible*, 90.

earthly life of Christ. Though they are four different stories they should not be studied apart from each other and their study should be done in historical context.

The parables. The parables were considered simple stories for listeners on the outside. In fact, we read that there was cause of frustration on the part of those who did not get the meaning of the parables because Jesus was explaining their meaning only to the few in his circle, the disciples. In his teaching, Jesus used different types of parables. There were the true parables which were the pure and simple story, i.e. The Good Samaritan, then the similitude, i.e. The Yeast in the Dough, and the metaphors and similes, i.e. you are the salt of the earth. When preaching the parables, the preacher must gain inside knowledge of the points of reference intended by Jesus and to try to understand and determine how the original listeners heard the story.

The laws. The laws that start with “do” or “do not” are called apodictic laws. The apodictic laws (e.g., Lev 19:9-14) are direct commands, generally applicable, telling the Israelites the things they are supposed to do and what not to do to fulfill their part of the covenant with God.⁴⁶ Other types of law explained by this book are the casuistic laws (uses the word *if*), the food laws, laws about shedding of blood, prohibitions, and laws giving blessings to those who keep them.

The prophets. In the Old Testament, the prophets are grouped in two groups: the major and the minor prophets. The prophets were considered to be God’s spokespersons and were very well respected. The message was their own, but inspired from God and they were held responsible for delivering it to the people.

Forms of prophetic utterances include the lawsuit, the woe, the promise, enactment prophecy, messenger speech and prophets speaking as poets.

⁴⁶ Fee and Stewart, *How to Read the Bible*, 171.

The Psalms. Psalms are difficult to interpret because they are poetic in nature. The content of the Psalms comes from the experience of the people addressing God. It is a message to or about God. Hebrew poetry addresses the mind of the hearer through the heart of the spokesperson. The Psalms themselves are musical poems appealing to emotions and feelings. The vocabulary is metaphorical, and that makes their interpretation much more difficult. The Psalms as literature are of different types, lament, thanksgiving, hymns of praise, salvation-history psalms, psalms of celebration and affirmation, and wisdom psalms.

Wisdom. “Wisdom is the ability to make godly choices in life.”⁴⁷ The wisdom books can be misused when we read only small sections instead of the whole, misuse the terms, or use the wisdom discourse without following the argument. God calls wise the people who follow and trust in him, not the ones with a high IQ. It is not a matter of being clever or quick, it is a matter of obedience and submission.

Wisdom is taught at home. In my country we say, “He [or she] does not have the seven years of home education” about a child or youth who misbehaves.

The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text by Sidney Greidanus has great and very detailed resources that can help in furthering the preacher’s knowledge in his or her studies of communication through preaching.⁴⁸ In the following paragraphs I would like to write some observations that surfaced in each chapter and caught my interest.

Biblical preaching (chap. 1). The section, preaching then and now, follows the history of God’s presence in the testimony of the witness/preacher as we move through

⁴⁷ Fee and Stewart, *How to Read the Bible*, 225.

⁴⁸ Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).

the Old Testament and New Testament to the present. The prophets did not proclaim their own message, but they spoke from the mouth of God, "Thus says the Lord!" In the New Testament, the Word became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ and dwelt among us. As we study the message of both Old and New Testaments we observe that the ultimate authority for the proclamation came from God. This fact remains true in today's preaching!

Historical foundations (chap. 2). The reliability of the Bible was tested and challenged many times in history. In his sovereignty, God governs the history but at the same time gives us freedom, initiative and holds us responsible for our actions. This caused and continues to cause differences of interpretation among scholars and church leaders.

Literary interpretation (chap. 3). A holistic approach of interpretation is more and more viewed as crucial in the circles of contemporary biblical interpreters. When studying a text, the literary dimensions, historical dimensions and the theological dimension shall be considered aspects contributing to the meaning of biblical texts.

Methods of literary interpretations are source criticism, which is concerned with the written resources underlying the biblical text; form criticism points to the need to identify the forms of the material, the structures, the intentions, and the settings. Redaction criticism views the gospels as they stand as individual entities; and rhetorical criticism focuses its attention to the relation of form, content, and the structural patterns of the text.

Historical interpretation (chap. 4). The text of the Scripture is a historical document and should be understood historically. As we study the text, we need an

understanding of the original intent and its meaning. This interpretation offers an objective point of control against our possible subjective or arbitrary interpretations. The interpreter of the text should see the message of the text not only in its immediate cultural context, but in its context of history as a whole.

Theological interpretation (chap. 5). The theological interpretation raises the question of the text being preserved in the Biblical canon. The Bible is a collection of writings telling us about God and his relationship to his creation and his people. The proclamation is that the Bible is the Word of God and the whole Scripture is God-breathed and inspired. Theological interpretation emphasizes various facets of biblical interpretation that might be neglected in historical and literary interpretation; particularly, the fact that Bible is from God not about God.

Textual-thematic preaching (chap. 6). Textual preaching is based on the exposition of a biblical text which gives authority to the sermon, guides to the preacher and engages the congregation. There are many ways of choosing the biblical text. For example, it can be the preacher's preference, the significance of that text, or a personal experience around a particular text.

The form of the sermon (chap. 7). Sermons are: Deductive, Inductive, Deductive-Inductive and Inductive-Deductive.

Narrative preaching allows for more flexibility and gives more options in sermon construction. There are advantages and disadvantages of narrative preaching. Advantages of narrative form are; uses the same form as the text, provides the sermon with a forward moving flow, involves the hearers more holistically, and communicates implicitly rather than explicitly. Disadvantages and pitfalls are; a tendency of the preachers to choose

narrative preaching as their only preference, preachers isolate the story from the larger context, it does not always communicate conviction, and if not properly communicated can lead to an open-story that can mislead the people's understanding.⁴⁹

The relevance of the sermon (chap. 8). After reading this section, I can say that my preaching will never again be the same. The reading of some of the other books in this chapter convinced me of the importance of asking myself, "Why am I preaching the sermon and what are the results I intend to achieve?" The sermon needs to be relevant and address a need. Raising and addressing the need of the congregation at a particular time will assure the congregation's participation, interest and willingness to accept the message. To understand the text we need to see what is behind the text and then carefully fill in the gaps to adapt the meaning of the text from *that time* to *this time*. A poor bridging of these gaps can take place by allegorizing, spiritualizing, imitating the Bible and moralizing.

Preaching Hebrew narratives (chap. 9). There are historical and non-historical narratives. Parables are not historical and cannot be interpreted as historical. As we consider the historical narratives, we need to observe that in his relationship with his people, God is always on the stage. He is present, engages people, initiates and takes actions, and ultimately commands the outcome. Considering all these facts, we need of the vital importance to recognize the plot of the story. A story without a plot is not a story at all. The narrator has a very important role in telling the story!

Preaching prophetic literature (chap. 10). Biblical prophecy is a message from God about God! It is the message containing his will, his covenant, his judgment, his redemption and his kingdom. Some messages of the prophets were foretelling and others

⁴⁹ Greidanus, *Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*, 151-52.

were forthtelling. Some messages were for the people of their time, others were messages for the present and the future, showing God always present and active in history.

Preaching the Gospels (chap. 11). The Gospels are the proclamation of the life of Christ “becoming flesh” and “living among us.” Because of the fact the gospels were written after the resurrection of Jesus, critics are suspicious of the story of Christ, suggesting it was created and not reflecting the events as they actually took place. The consensus is that the purpose of the gospels message is to call people to faith in Christ.

Preaching the Epistles (chap. 12). The letters (epistles) are full of details and meanings. There is a great variety and some are written specifically for a certain occasion. Some epistles are more personal than others. In the process of selecting the text, we need to make sure of the integrity of the literary unit as it contains the purpose which the author had in mind when writing it. We need to recognize that the epistles are messages of God and about God. They are also part of the story of God’s redemption, will and presence in history.

God’s Word Through Preaching contains the Lyman Beecher Lectures before the Theological Department of Yale College by Dr. John Hall in 1875.⁵⁰ Although it is an old book, it contains great resources for appreciation of God’s Word communicated through preaching. The following are some samples of topics contained in the lectures. Preaching is viewed not as an independent event separated from the ministry, but as part of the whole work of the ministry. With that perspective, the whole person of the preacher engages the searching for the text, preparation of the text and delivery of the sermon before the congregation.

⁵⁰ John Hall, *God’s Word Through Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979).

Hall looks at the preacher as a pastor. In order to match the preaching with the real needs of the congregants, the pastor needs to know the people just like a doctor knows his patients. This can be accomplished through pastoral visits at home, in the hospital and other places providing for a variety of situations. While the pastor gets to know the people to whom he is preaching every Sunday, he also allows the congregants to know him.

Regarding the preaching, Hall argues for: quality not quantity, understanding, and simplicity by adjusting the sermon to the audience, boldness in delivery, memorization of the sermon and effective delivery. He also tackles the steps of sermon preparation with treatment to each phase and the importance of it.

Culture Shift by David Henderson helps us with a deeper understanding of the audience.⁵¹ It starts with a focus on the necessity of gaining the hearing of the audience. Capturing the attention is crucial for the entire event of preaching. Considering the audience (the consumers or the spectators) the sermons have to be relevant and connect the Biblical world with the world of the individual.

Henderson lists the shift of focus in the last seven hundred years “from God to humanity, from the group to the individual, from responsibility to rights, from others to self, from service to self-expression, from blessings to needs.”⁵² The shift gives us an insight into the mindset of the individuals in the pews and their expectation of how the Word appeals to them. This fact has ramifications on how we preach and teach, how we share our faith and how we communicate God’s character. The issue is if a secular world

⁵¹ David W. Henderson, *Culture Shift: Communicating God’s Truth to Our Changing World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998).

⁵² Henderson, *Culture Shift*, 102.

is ready to hear of God's sovereignty, God's claim on us (election), His love, His holiness and His miracles. All these facts subject for debate in the public arena.

"Postmodernism is the affirmation that there are no absolutes. Postmodernism is not so much a new worldview as it is the death of any coherent worldview . . . it unites existentialism, nihilism, and perspectivism with three modern cousins: pluralism, multiculturalism, and deconstructionism. Pluralism and multiculturalism further the aggressive debunking of any one way of making sense of the world. Pluralism holds that all belief systems are equally true. Multiculturalism insists that every culture is equally worthwhile."⁵³

Mastering Contemporary Preaching is an effort by three preachers to present the task of preaching in the contemporary setting.⁵⁴ The book is divided in four parts with emphasis on the audience, the task of preaching, topics for preaching and a close look at the preacher. Preaching is the delivery of God's message by His authority. This is liberating. The preacher understands that the words he delivers are not his own. While the audience is diverse and there are many variants (i.e. culture, demographics, language), it is important to keep in perspective the fact that preaching is bringing the Good News to that specific group of people. Both Haddon Robinson and Stuart Briscoe emphasize the importance of preaching sermons that represent the audience's interest by bringing the Bible content into life application. The sermons need to be interesting, insightful and creative. Preaching is an appeal to both mind and heart.

⁵³ Henderson, *Culture Shift*, 192.

⁵⁴ Bill Hybels, Stewart Briscoe, and Haddon Robinson, *Mastering Contemporary Preaching* (Portland, Ore.: Multnomah, 1989).

In the beginning of *Fundamentals of Preaching*, John Killinger agrees with Phillip Brooks's definition of preaching as "truth through personality."⁵⁵ I feel that this should be the motto for all attempts for sermon building. The preacher's first call is to love. This is a short statement that disqualifies many who get up before congregations, who did not get to the accomplishment of a truthful love, unconditional and steadfast. The love in the life of the preacher has to be nourished by a love for God's Word. The preacher will be able to explore the depths of God's love and then and only then to transmit it to others. Killinger brings up the concept of taking occasional notes also called "gems" that will serve as points of inspiration for future studies.⁵⁶

The order of preparation of the sermon in Killinger's view is first, the gathering of information, then the studying of the text in the original language and only after that, the consultation of commentaries. The use of academics is necessary in the study. But when it comes to delivery, the preacher must not show symptoms of "academicitis."⁵⁷

A good communicator brings his or her own dimensions. Our messages are shaped by the experiences we have on a daily basis. The encounters we have provide us with ideas that are prompted by the Spirit of God in the process of our listening to God. When we tell our stories, we exercise the art of storytelling which brings out our humanity. "Everyone has a story to tell."⁵⁸ Through the telling of our story, we share our lives. Through the telling of the biblical story, we enhance the lives of others.

The biblical truth must hold its honorary position of importance. Not to go to extremes, "faithful preachers keep the humanistic disciplines and the biblical theology in

⁵⁵ John Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 10.

⁵⁶ Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching*, 49.

⁵⁷ Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching*, 24.

⁵⁸ Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching*, 35.

creative tension with one another and use psychological understanding to explore more fully the meaning of the gospel in the modern world.”⁵⁹ Killinger writes on the importance of a good outline stating that it secures a good flow, helps the preacher maintain grasp of the ideas and helps the audience for a better comprehension. The common tendency is to judge the sermon on its content. Killinger goes beyond that and stresses the importance of a good introduction and a good ending. Good introductions captivate the audience. He uses the term arrest to reveal the intensity of the moment. A bad start can jeopardize the whole sermon. Killinger finds it very important to stress the importance of illustrations and a well-organized and planned delivery. All of these elements of sermon preparation and delivery are for the benefit of the growth of the preacher as well as the audience.

Overall I found Killinger’s book very informative and challenging. It serves as a great resource for the people who want to venture into the field of preaching. It is creativity mixed with excitement that carries also a great responsibility because it is the word of God that can save and secure eternal life. The preacher has to pay attention to all the details of the Word, the sensitivity of the listening audience and their immediate needs.

Between Two Worlds is useful for the study of the history of preaching from the time of the apostles until now.⁶⁰ It takes us through history showing how the message was transmitted in its full glory without being affected by any exterior factors. The third chapter focuses on theological foundations for preaching, listing a series of convictions about who God is, the written Word, the Church, the pastor’s role and the task of

⁵⁹ Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching*, 39.

⁶⁰ John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

preaching. The book also serves as a good reference for sermon preparation steps and delivery strategies.

John R. W. Stott has always been a source of support and encouragement for preachers across the world. In *The Preacher's Portrait* he describes the preacher as a steward, a herald, a witness a father, and a servant.⁶¹

Preaching is hard work and at times the preacher can be dispirited. What gives power to the proclamation is the fact that the message is God's word and the position of the preacher is that of a sower of the seed. As stewards we are called to preach the whole counsel of God.

Steward is a domestic metaphor. It takes us into a house, where we think of a householder entrusting his steward with certain stores for the wellbeing of the household. Herald is a political metaphor. It takes us into the open air, perhaps a market place or a street corner, where the herald sounds his trumpet to gather people together, and then, on behalf of his king, makes urgent proclamation of glad tidings. But witness is a legal metaphor. It takes us into the law courts. We see the judge on his bench and the prisoner on trial in the dock. We hear the case argued by barristers, first the prosecution, then the defense, who call witness to substantiate what they say.⁶²

The father figure comes through the relationship a preacher has with the congregation. The role of the preacher goes beyond the time in the pulpit. The preacher is also a pastor, a shepherd, a counselor and friend. We take that role thorough an attitude of humble servanthood.

George E. Sweazey's *Preaching the Good News* opens with focusing on the importance, developments and the purpose for preaching.⁶³ The source of authority for the preacher is his commission, his special training, his church and the Scripture. After

⁶¹ John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher's Portrait* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961).

⁶² Stott, *Preacher's Portrait*, 61.

⁶³ George E. Sweazey, *Preaching the Good News* (Engelwood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1976).

laying the basics about preaching in general, Sweazey writes about a sermon's structure, some steps of preparation, writing the sermon's manuscripts and the act of delivery. A few chapters were very helpful in understanding the use of humor, the preaching of controversial preaching topics, preaching on social morality and preaching of personal problems. I think that every preacher has had the challenge of one or all of these issues.

In the first four chapters of *The Preacher's Heritage, Task and Resources*, I found very helpful aids for the understanding of the preacher's work.⁶⁴

Chapter 5 refers to the preacher's aim. The ultimate goal is the conversion of the hearer. The Word of God brings revelation of God's nature and allows the convert to enter a personal relationship with God. The proclamation of the Word also brings the healing of the soul. God's word connects with and satisfies our longing for the divine and answers our life's questions. In our pilgrimage, we need our faith to be nurtured and that is also the aim of the preacher's message. In the context of worship and also teaching, we interpret God's truth that guides our life.

Chapter 6 refers to the preacher's difficulties. The question for the leaders and the pastors of our churches today is how to attract people outside the church. We have people come to visit our churches and we are puzzled about why they do not return. This is the reality of the church worldwide. The minds of the people are stimulated way beyond what the churches can provide. Looking at the people in the pews we are concerned that apathy and indifference affect the impact of our witness.

Chapter 7 refers to the preacher's opportunities to counteract the difficulties. The authority of the message comes from the fact that it declares God's irrevocable truth. In

⁶⁴ Ralph G. Turnbull, *The Preacher's Heritage, Task and Resources* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968).

our society, truth becomes more and more irrelevant. Individuals claim to have their own truth based on their experience and understanding of life. Not knowing the real truth of God leaves life void. That creates a great opportunity for the preacher to see and understand the urgency of preaching, which is material covered in chapter 8.

In the first section of *the Big Idea of Biblical Preaching*, the authors list some important hermeneutic commitments.⁶⁵ Recognizing Scriptures as God-breathed requires the preacher to have a high view of Scripture. In order to declare the Word with authority, a careful and diligent exegetical work needs to be done. The starting point is recognizing properly the subject and the complement. This process will lead to the main idea which directs the composition of the sermon.

Each chapter of this book is written by former students of Dr. Haddon Robinson in defense of his “One Idea” preaching approach. Duane Litfin writes on challenges to the Big Idea preaching, and on the same subject, Paul Borden asks the question: “Is There a Really Big Idea in That Story?”

Considering the curriculum for preaching in mission context, the section written by Terry Mattingly is very much on target. He addresses “The Preaching the Big Idea to Cultures and Subcultures.”

A preacher needs to be aware of the signals the surrounding cultures send. Cultures are shaped by preferences in life style, cultural background, current trends and a transformational world. Our generation is a stimulated visually and a good way to communicate is using media. Through the use of media, we tell stories appealing to people’s emotions and life stories.

⁶⁵ Keith Willhite and Scott M. Gibson, *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to the People* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998).

In a sense, a preacher's message is missionary in context. We no longer need to travel long distances to encounter the mission field. There are people who think differently, come from different cultures and enter our churches Sunday after Sunday. The preaching impacts the church and the marketplace in the same way it did through Paul's ministry.

John W. Reed writes on visualizing the Big Idea by the use of illustration as acts of clarifying or explaining. Illustrations are means to bring clarity, draw pictures in the mind of the listeners, and to persuade them to action. The elements of illustrating the sermon are: concrete examples, human interest stories that tell about real people solving problems, touch people emotionally, use comparison and contrast, and use dynamic imagery.

Books about Teaching and Instruction

Duane Litfin's *Public Speaking* is helpful in understanding some key principles of public speaking.⁶⁶

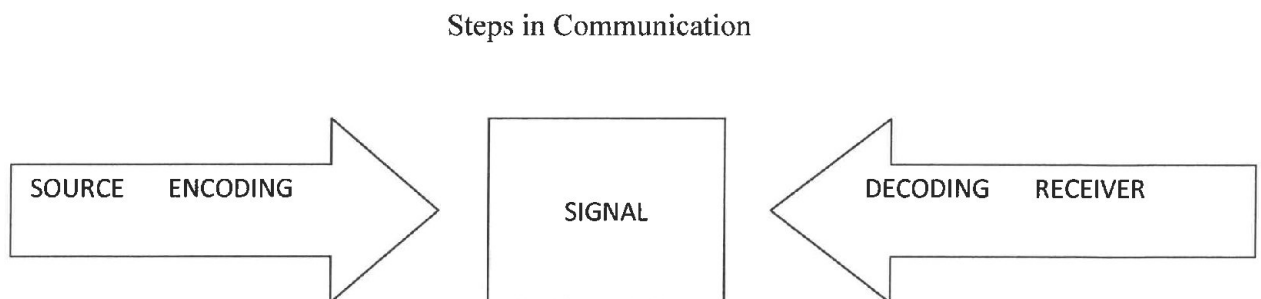


Figure 2. Steps in Communication

⁶⁶ Duane Litfin, *Public Speaking: A Handbook for Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).

The diagram of steps of communication (p. 19) helps and enables the reader to understand the relationship between the source of the transmitted information, the encoding of the signal and its decoding process and the receiver. This is because communication is linear and the message travels from the source to the receiver and there is the translation in the process which is the key to effective communication.

Reading of the characteristics of a good public speaker enables us to see in detail things we need to do to improve. As a minister, I understand the necessity for integrity, sensitivity, knowledge, desire and skill. These are all needed in the preacher's life. I need to be at my best in all. Regarding the audience analysis, the necessity to adapt to the audience is pointed out with eloquence. I did similar studies in my preaching and communication classes in college and seminary and I felt that the reading of chapter two was very beneficial as a reminder of the principles of adaptation. In my years of ministry, I can say that too many times I felt frustrated by the fact that some people in the audience were not interested in the sermon, falling asleep and acting dismissive. The reading about voluntary and involuntary attention brought new insight into my understanding of the audience. There is a two-way communication expectation. As much as we want for our parishioners to understand us, we need to understand them.

Coming from a different culture, I had trouble understanding some things about the American culture. I found it very helpful to read about Wayne Minnik's work on "understanding your own culture and reinforcing your awareness of just how quickly belief systems of an entire society can change over just few decades."⁶⁷ I have experienced those changes. As we observe and experience theoretic values, economic values, aesthetic values, social values, political values and religious values, we try to

⁶⁷ Litfin, *Public Speaking*, 67.

uphold them in the light of our Christian faith. Thinking of the Romanian lay preachers, I know that they will have a similar experience as they will minister in cultures that are different than theirs.

A very different approach to instruction is found in Robert Mager's *Preparing Instructional Objectives*.⁶⁸ This book has an element of interaction allowing the reader to answer questions related to the understanding and the application of the material.

The book focuses on objectives that need to be considered in every instructional manual. The objectives raise the awareness of the importance of clarity of the instruction, expectancy of the student's understanding and response to the material. Instruction is for the purpose of changing the students. The starting point is to evaluate what the students already know, discover what they need for instruction and to set a goal for the outcome. The preparation for instruction has three phases: analysis, design and implementation. Mager gives a step by step approach to the instructional process. The material can be applied to the design of a curriculum in any instructional setting.

I chose *Creating Understanding* for its focus on the message and the audience.⁶⁹ In his overview of the book, Donald Smith triggers the attention of the reader by the challenge of "knowing where you are going."⁷⁰ The message shall be prepared with the audience in mind. The audience needs to be captured and involved. The communication of the message involves a "transaction in which there is a simultaneous giving and receiving."⁷¹ The book also lists twelve signal systems which are present in all communication: verbal, written, numeric, pictorial, artifactual, audio, kinetic, optical,

⁶⁸ Robert F. Mager, *Preparing Instructional Objectives* (Belmont, Calif.: Lake, 1984).

⁶⁹ Donald K. Smith, *Creating Understanding: A Handbook for Christian Communication Across Cultural Landscapes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992).

⁷⁰ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 15.

⁷¹ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 67.

tactile, spatial, temporal and olfactory.⁷² These are important facts to consider as signals we use in the communication process. A preacher must be aware of these factors when determining and effective sermon delivery.

Interviews

Interviews with Romanian Pastors and Lay Preachers

The selection of the people interviewed for this section reflects the variety and the particulars in a number of ministry settings.⁷³ The feedback will help me discern what the teaching approach will be and the specific needs of the Romanian pastors and lay ministers have.

Purpose

I met with a group of fourteen pastors and lay ministers of the Romanian Baptist Church. They are members of the Maranata Mission, active and ministering in the northwest of Romania. The purpose for our meeting was to share their call to ministry, their ministry experience and to get insight into their preaching ministry. Gathering this information enabled me to discern methods and information on how to prepare and write a curriculum which will help them prepare and deliver sermons with impact and effectiveness. Upon hearing what the project outcome would be, they asked how soon I would be able to complete the curriculum.

⁷² Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 146.

⁷³ Interviews at a workshop on the call to ministry with focus on preaching, Romanian pastors and lay ministers, Zalau, Romania, March 23, 2011. Because some information is confidential, I will not identify them by name or share their personal information. For all of the interview and workshop material, see Appendix 1.

Strategy and Steps of Systematic Design Instruction for the Maranata Mission

The process of design starts with interviews of the pastors and the lay preachers and ends with the use of this material in their ministry. The steps to prepare and assure an effective teaching will follow the Systems Approach Model designed by Walter Dick and Lou Carey in combination with the model presented by Dr. Sid Buzzell in a class at Gordon- Conwell Seminary.

First, the proposed outcome of this project is to identify instructional methods which will teach the preachers to prepare and deliver sermons with clarity and maximum impact.

The second step is interviewing the group to identify their entry behavior and to assess their level of knowledge and practice. At this level, their input enables me to design a curriculum which will build on what they know instead of assumptions or guesswork. My focus was on specific skills the pastors already have. Our time together gave me insight into what they know and even some things they know but may have to unlearn.

The third step is conducting task analysis on the outcomes. In this step I am using the data to analyze the answers provided by the ministers. The data consists of information regarding their personal, family, career and ministry goals. I am looking for specific information related to specific skills the ministers have in order to use this curriculum.

The fourth step is writing performance objectives. This point contains specific statements of the goals of this curriculum. At the end of this instruction, the students will

be expected to prepare and deliver memorable sermons with clarity and maximum impact. The focus is going to be on stages of preparation and delivery of sermons.

The fifth step is conducting task analysis of the goals.

The sixth step is the writing the curriculum. At this stage, I am developing the criterion-referenced tests, which will be tools to allow me to monitor the learning ability of the ministers in order to achieve our stated goals. This will be achieved through class time allowing for discussion, some take home assignments, group discussion and by individual instruction.

Step seven is developing an instructional strategy. The curriculum will be based on three hours class time, some individual work and a sermon delivered before the class. Each minister will be expected to write a sermon; a randomly selected number will deliver their sermon.

Step eight is focused on evaluation. Each minister is going to give an individual evaluation of the curriculum. The evaluation of the curriculum will also include a group evaluation where a small group from the class will attend the preaching event.

After the first and each successive seminar, I am going to revise my instruction based on the evaluation and feedback I will receive from each group.

Method of Information Gathering

We met for three hours and shared a meal. The last part of our workshop consisted of a series of questions and the attendees wrote their answers. My surprise was to find pastors with many years of experience wanting to become mentors for young lay

preachers and newly ordained pastors. These pastors desire to get new skills and advance their knowledge of effective preaching.

Interpretation of Interview Results

Present at the workshop were fourteen male ministers. Four are lay ministers and ten are ordained ministers in Baptist churches across Romania. Age ranges from 31 to 71 years. The ordained ministers have been in ministry for a time ranging from 5 to 32 years and they pastor on an average of two churches. One minister has more than five churches in his parish. All except one are married and have children. Studying their answers to questions related to their personal, family and ministry life, I developed a detailed list of issues which enabled me to better understand these ministers as well as designing a way to help in their ministry.

Call to Ministry

They all have a strong confirmed sense of call to preach and minister in churches. They are thankful for God's call and grateful in their obedience to it. As they serve the Lord, they are grateful for the support they received from their wives and the acknowledgment and the support from their communities. Some have lengthy experience. They would like to apply that experience to train and mentor young ministers. To rise to that task, they realize they need to get all the necessary skills and knowledge.

Preaching the Word

I think there is a universal truth regarding the call to preach. While there is a sense of divine in the call, there is also tremendous sense of responsibility. The students in my seminary class at Gordon-Conwell were told that our call to preach is a lifetime commitment and if we are not prepared to keep it, better not start it.

The concerns of these ministers will be examined and addressed during our classroom studies. Let's take a look at these concerns.

Hear from God. Just like the prophets, the preachers must be able to hear from God before communicating the gospel to others. The heart of the proclamation is, "Thus says the Lord." A messenger cannot say that until he hears what the Lord says. It is very refreshing to see ministers with this concern rising in the pulpits in Romania today.

Communicate effectively. A great change in perspective is the focus on efficient delivery of sermons. Preaching to see results in changed lives is vital for ministry. These ministers are not interested in light and entertaining preaching. One said, "I want for us to move from a humorous sermon to one rooted in Scripture that will change lives for the Lord." The proof of effective preaching in these ministers' eyes is in the winning of souls. As I observed in the questionnaire, the most joy in their ministry is seeing people saved and churches full.

Fidelity to the Scripture. In the past, there were no resources available to study the Bible. The only way to prepare sermons was to read, and read and read some more while praying for illumination. As resources are made available and with their access to

the internet, these ministers are eager to learn new things while remaining true to the Scripture message.

Build people in their faith. Developing sermons to build the faith of the hearers is very important. As we rejoice with seeing new converts filling our empty pews, we realize they come hungry for knowledge and truth. It is the responsibility of the preacher to feed them the Word of God.

Clarity. In the Old Testament, the prophet is the watchman who watches into the night. When the enemy comes, he is to blow the trumpet and alert the people in the city of the impending danger. As they speak the prophetic word of God, the preachers are to deliver a clear message, a message that will be understood and not cause confusion. This need will be well addressed in the sermon delivery section of chapter 4.

Relevance. The message has to be relevant to the people in the pews. While it sounds encouraging for us to read of great things God did thousands of years ago, the question in the pews is “If the truth related to God’s actions in the past is true today, how does that affect us?” We are to transmit the eternal truth of God’s character revealed to us today just as freshly and powerfully as He did to his people in the past. Dr. Don Sunuljian’s teaching on the subject will be taught in this section.

Other Concerns in Ministry

One concern was how to handle people not interested in hearing the word of God. Or, if people hear the Word, why are they not changed, and why do some leave the church? One minister in particular was concerned about saying something in the pulpit and causing people to leave the church because of that. I am convinced that they will find

consolation and peace about these concerns during our time in the classroom. To better illustrate my answer to these concerns I would like to give the example of an experience I had one Sunday morning while driving to church.

It was my Sunday to preach. As my car was moving down the freeway, my eyes paused for few seconds on my Bible resting on the dashboard. In that moment I felt very humble to think that God called me to speak his Word to the people he would send to the church that morning. Then I thought that at that very moment there were millions of people with “That Book” open, reading, preaching and hearing from God. The fact is God is using us in spite of our limitations. My call is to do diligent work to prepare and allow the Holy Spirit to guide me and inspire me. Then, as I recognize my limitations, to step into the pulpit with confidence in Him that he will use me to speak.

Sin. From personal sin to the sin of others, there is a strong sense of desperation to seek strength from God and empowering in ministry. Satan is identified as their strongest enemy. There was a lot of interest in getting insights on how to deal with spiritual warfare. We spent a lot of time not only in the workshop but also during the whole week looking at ways to resist and conquer evil. At a personal level, few ministers are seeking understanding in how to deal with family members who are not Christians. One minister’s wife is not a believer and more than one has children who are not following the Lord. Their question is how to have an effective ministry and how to preach to others when those in their own household do not hear the Lord? The questions surfaced many times on the importance of prayer in ministry.

Traditionalism. Another concern they shared is traditionalism. There is a sense of the desire to be renewed and adapted to the culture surrounding the churches. Yet these

ministers are seeking ways to embrace changes without changing the message.

Eliminating traditionalism and formality is viewed as a desired and a scary process at the same time.

In the future I am considering introducing the first person sermon approach. This will address some of these issues. Yet I see that it will be a while until this style will be fully embraced. Considering the Romanian culture has a great oral tradition, first person sermons are a departure from the traditional and might work well.

Personal security. At a personal level, some ministers came through as being insecure about several issues concerning their ministry.

Being good enough was the first of them. They desire to be best husbands, fathers, pastors, preachers, and counselors. To cover all these roles they need more than one life. Because of their many roles and responsibility for more than one congregation, these pastors are afraid of burn-out. In the content of the curriculum, I am planning to include practical tools and ways which will allow them how to escape the entrapment of feeling desperate. I will teach them how to establish priorities, carve time for sermon preparation and get quality time for family. If there is anything that has to characterize our life it is balance.

Knowing God surfaced as a desire among these pastors. To know the heart of God is vital for the preachers. They seek to discern his voice, his plan and speak his Word. They desire to feel they belong to God. In the face of fear, lies and people they cannot trust they long for intimacy and closeness to God. Two ministers shared their fear of “losing their salvation and the prize of their labor.” As I reflect over these fears, I realize how much the preaching curriculum is going to help them. Preaching skills that will give

them confidence in hearing and understanding God's word will enhance their ministry. They are afraid they are not doing enough. That is a lot of pressure and will eventually lead to burnout.

Fear of lacking the Holy Spirit also made pastors feel insecure. How I wish I could convey to them the knowledge of how close God is to us even when we feel him distant.

Salvation of people. There is a hunger for results. The ministers interviewed desire churches filled with people on fire for the Lord. They want to see lives changed and transformed by God's Word. They see this ultimate goal as their greatest joy and greatest challenge at the same time. Some shared their pain of having members of their family not knowing the Lord. This I can see as a great challenge.

Family issues. These included communication, health, enough time with family, financial challenges and aging. Somewhere in our discussions we are going to address these issues but not directly related to preaching.

Unity. Unity of progress, unity among church members, and unity among leaders is desired by a wide number of the majority of these ministers. Lack of unity raises serious obstacles in their ministry. Stubborn people, gossip, and infighting are just few examples.

Mission. Passion for seeing churches full and new churches planted is at the core of their ministries. They would like to design strategies which will create results. Some of them expressed concern for lack of vision on the part of the leaders in their churches. They are seeking ways to encourage a culture of openness and even risk taking for the accomplishment of mission goals. I am confident that they will get their answers.

At the conclusion of this section, I would like to say that I see in these ministers a great force of change and transformation of the preaching culture in Romania. In spite of hardships, overwhelming challenges, financial difficulties and personal issues, they are determined to advance the Kingdom of God and I am thrilled to be able to offer my help.

F. Dale Bruner

F. Dale Bruner is considered by many to be one of the foremost biblical scholars in the United States.⁷⁴ Dale came to know Christ and grew in faith at the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, a church he still calls home. Dr. Bruner graduated from Occidental College in 1954; he then earned his master of divinity degree at Princeton Theological Seminary and his doctor of philosophy degree at Hamburg University in Germany. After teaching for eleven years at Union Theological Seminary in the Philippines, he moved to Whitworth College in 1975. Candidly, Dale considers his years in the Philippines among the hardest of his adult life. Upon retirement from Whitworth, in 1997, Dale and his wife of forty-six years, Kathy, moved to Pasadena, California, where he embarked on new studies at Fuller Theological Seminary. "On weekdays I walk an hour to the seminary," he says, "where I am now quietly doing research toward a commentary on the Gospel of John." Acknowledging his single-minded, scholarly nature, he adds, "Most afternoons after work, Kathy and I walk together in the park so that I can learn to 'chat,' my single major challenge in life!" On Sunday mornings during the school year he enjoys teaching at his home church. "I am

⁷⁴ Interview with F. Dale Bruner, Fountain Courtyard Garden, Pasadena City Hall, Pasadena, California, July 8, 2011,

deeply grateful to God for the privilege of studying and teaching what I believe with the Church is the single most important subject in the world: the gospel of Jesus Christ.”⁷⁵

The following are insights from our conversation.

Bruner was never ordained as clergy. When he started with that statement I thought the interview would not be very useful. Then, he engaged with passion to tell me about his decades of teaching and mission work. Dr. Bruner spoke with praise about growing up in church under the preaching of Reverend Louis Evans and attending Sunday school classes taught by Henrietta Mears. The passion and dedication of such servants of God caused him to call preaching and teaching “instruments of his conversion.” He also expressed great admiration for good preachers like Earl Palmer and his current pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. In his view, the most important quality of a good pastor is humility. The pastor “should not be too much in himself,” he said. A humble pastor is the “perfect modern preacher.”

A good sermon needs some key conditions.

First, is to be gospel-oriented. Christ-centered preaching is necessary for the growth of the church.

Second, the sermon has to have good illustrations to make it relevant. That shows that “the preacher cares for us” in the pews. The illustrations should make the text “come home” and connect with the audience.

Third, the sermon should be faithful to the Scripture text. When I asked Dr. Bruner about the length of the sermon he said that twenty minutes is the norm for most of the churches today, but it varies from church to church.

⁷⁵ This biography is posted on the website of First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, where Dr. Bruner is teaching.

Dr. Bruner agrees with Haddon Robinson's view of one idea preaching. He said that his current pastor brings the idea of the text in his title, and then he approaches that idea from few different angles during his delivery.

"I am encouraged by a strong trend of good preachers coming out of Fuller Seminary. They are the gift of the church," he said with great optimism for the future of preaching in the United States and the world.

I asked Dr. Bruner if he ever heard bad preaching and how you can judge that. One thing that makes bad preaching is being "too oratorical," a preaching style that puts the attention on the preacher and not on the message and definitely not on Christ. Also, bad preaching is caused by lack of illustrations. Dr. Bruner preaches from the pulpit and has a manuscript but does not depend on it. He said you need to know the content of the manuscript but not read it. That will take away the effectiveness of eye contact. Memorizing the manuscript is "too showy" and intimidates the preachers.

After my studies at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, I became aware of the immense preparation work and focus on careful delivery of powerful and effective messages. When I asked Dr. Bruner about skills improvement, he said he is not "high on making skills the major factor." He said he wants to make sure that the preacher is focused on Christ and preaches with conviction. He is focused on the content of preaching rather than the delivery.

We spoke about his experience teaching in the international context. He had experience teaching in Turkey, Thailand, Yugoslavia and the Philippines and here in the United States he taught at Union Theological Seminary, Whitworth Seminary and is now at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Dr. Bruner has a high view of preaching, considers the preacher the major gift of the church and he likes messages proclaimed with passion and compassion. I walked away from this interview with a great respect toward a man of God who dedicated his whole life teaching and instructing students to become “the gift of churches” all over the world.

Larry D. Ballenger

The Reverend Dr. Larry Ballenger has served Presbyterian congregations in Arcadia, Fresno, Irvine and Ukiah, California, and has been interim pastor at Mendocino Presbyterian Church and Glendale Presbyterian Church. Pastor Ballenger is a member of the board of directors of Zephyr Point Presbyterian Conference Center. Larry and his wife, Judy, live at Monte Vista Grove in Pasadena, California.⁷⁶ I chose to interview Dr. Ballenger because of his long-time ministry experience as a teacher and pastor and his involvement in mission work.

We spoke of the changes he has observed in the ministry of preaching in recent years. Dr. Ballenger noted an increase use of media and visuals. That changes the approach to sermon delivery and effectiveness in preaching. Some do it very well, some do not! Dr. Ballenger’s approach to sermon preparation is very conservative. He likes to start with the Scripture. He was rather critical of those who start with anything but the biblical text. He studies the text, does the exegetical work using the original languages and then he uses adequate illustrations for bringing the message to the contemporary audience.

⁷⁶ Interview with Larry D. Ballenger, at his home, Pasadena, California, August 12, 2011.

Dr. Ballenger noticed an increased trend of topical preaching. He mentioned that it seems that more “liberal churches” are inclined not to use textual preaching. He does not agree with that approach because of his high view of textual preaching. He uses the lectionary not “slavishly” but more as a guide. His preaching was and continues to be influenced by preachers like Jim Edwards, Earl Palmer and Dale Bruner. He likes them because of their focus on the biblical text.

When I asked Dr. Ballenger about how he would design a seminar for a lay preacher’s training, he said that he would give the students some key ways to approach the text. These would include using resources that do not necessitate the knowledge of the original biblical languages. As resources he would start with a study Bible, an interlinear Bible, commentaries, concordances and Bible dictionaries.

On the question about the effectiveness of preaching Dr. Ballenger said the first most important thing is eye contact. From behind of the pulpit as well as close up front, the preacher needs to engage the congregation. The preacher needs a well-modulated voice used skillfully. As to what makes the sermon relevant, he said, “Preach the Word and address the current issues the congregation is facing.” The perfect tool to drive the message home is proper use of illustrations. He said that there were times when after the sermon his wife asked him, “What was the connection between the sermon and the illustration you used this time?”

Omelcu Toader

Pastor Omelcu is a graduate of the Pentecostal Theological Institute in Bucharest.⁷⁷ I chose this minister because he is very young and brings some perspective from a new generation of Romanian pastors. The interview is transcribed below, with answers following the questions asked.

Could you please give us a background of your ministry?

I preach the Word of God at the Emanuel Pentecostal Church in Sibiu as well as in churches outside the city. I am also involved with youth work in our church. I have been in ministry for seven years.

Could you please address changes and/or transformation of religious culture and/or thoughts since the 1989 revolution?

After the fall of communism, the Romanian people rather unprepared encountered democracy. In regards to the freedom of religion, manifested primarily in the form of public witness, there is a great progress. The last ten to fifteen years are characterized by an opening to theological training of the Pentecostal preacher. This is a major change specifically in the Pentecostal church. There is more importance given to academic approach of sermon preparations, private Christian life, but not so much in a practical application.

Reflecting on the current status of preaching in Romania, what are the greatest accomplishments?

As accomplishments we have pastors who are theologically and intellectually prepared in the Romanian churches. In recent years the preaching was focused on

⁷⁷ Email interview with Omelcu Toader, Emanuel Pentecostal Church, Sibiu, Romania, October 17, 2011.

subjects related to the human existence rather than just the emotional condition of the people in the pews.

What are the greatest needs?

A great need is the direct character of preaching, meaning preaching which condemns sin. The comments after such preaching are negative, the youth feels targeted and that makes the preachers shy away from such preaching.

Another aspect of preaching need is the lack of authority or the sermon and the preacher. I am thinking of sermons causing miracles, authentic conversions . . . just like the Apostle Paul's preaching. I think this need is not only in Romania. Who knows?

Reflecting on the training strategies for preaching, what can you tell me about training resources?

The Romanian preacher has more than ever the blessing of available resources. There are good theological books about the preacher and preaching translated in Romanian. Also we have dictionaries and encyclopedias. Digital resources are also unlimited and more and more accessible.

What can you tell me about training needs?

Training is needed. The most important need is for mentoring. The mentor-disciple relationship is not very much visible.

How about lay preaching training. Is it needed? How is it accomplished?

Training of the lay people is necessary. They also labor for the spiritual growth of the church.

How do you see the training of mission workers in local national and international field?

The Scripture tells us that the gospel shall be witness to every people. If I understand your question correctly all preaching is missional. The final scope of witnessing is winning souls for heaven. Local, national and international field of ministry implies and needs special resources for training.

Do you see a preaching course for lay ministers helping the current needs?

Yes.

What shall be the main focus of training?

The main focus shall be spiritual growth. After that there is the practical and theoretical approach to learning to preach. That can be learned easier.

What resources will be needed?

Good, mature in Christ and experienced teachers for preaching. Then there is need for a place, a time and didactic tools.

What venue do you see most efficient for this kind of training?

Considering the content and the intent of this approach I consider that a more casual setup will be more conducive. Maybe using someone's home might be better than the church sanctuary.

Pastor Omelcu sees the opportunity to engage in new ways the preaching activity in Romania. He sees the challenge to preach effective and life-changing sermons, targeting the Romanian youth. He desires ways to engage the Scripture to preach sermons that can be applied in the daily life of the listener.

Alex Bruda

Alex is not ordained in ministry, but he has done a lot of mission work teaching and training church leaders in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the Middle East.⁷⁸ He serves as the Resource Team Director for Every Generation Ministries in these regions and has a vast knowledge of teaching and curriculum writing in international and missional context. I have known Alex for about four years and not only do I know his ministry, but we had worked together in Romania's mission field. The interview is transcribed below, with answers following the questions asked.

Could you please give us a historical background of your ministry?

Every Generation Ministries is an international, interdenominational Christian organization which ministers together with local churches to develop effective ministry to children and their families. EGM was founded in 1993 in response to God's desire to see children transformed in Christ through His Church.

What are some of the changes and/or transformation of religious culture and/or thoughts since the 1989 revolution?

Most of the Romanian citizens will acknowledge that the revolution brought great and necessary changes. They were free to express themselves, to practice their faith, to elect their leaders. For many of them the economic context improved, even though it was not the same for everyone. There are, though, some negative changes affecting the Romanian nationals, as they were free to "import" the good things, also the negative aspects of the more developed countries. The crime increased, substances use (drugs) or pornography was coming on the same package with the painfully paid freedom. The

⁷⁸ Interview with Alex Bruda, November 8, 2011; email response, November 11, 2011.

“democracy” affected the church; this is why we could observe, in the past years, a more relaxed approach of the spiritual life, and an increased openness to prosperity gospel, postmodernism principles, etc.

Reflecting on the current status of preaching in Romania, what are the greatest accomplishments?

Access to studies and resources makes preaching more informative in terms of accurate and sound biblical exegesis.

What are the greatest needs?

Practical application and response need to be appropriate for the challenges that the audience is facing this days.

Reflecting on training strategies for preaching, what are the training resources?

There are long-term formal training programs offered by the theological seminaries. I would dare say there is an inflation of students trained formally as pastors in comparison with the capacity the churches have to support staff.

What are the training needs?

The need is for training all the lay ministers, preachers but also the ones that are involved in specific ministries as children, youth, etc.

Reflecting on the need for lay preachers training, is it needed?

YES!

How is it accomplished?

There is very little effort in this area and what is done is done mainly by local churches.

Do you see a preaching course for lay ministers helping the current needs?

Yes.

What shall be the main focus of the training?

The main focus should be, in my opinion, to develop the practical skills required to have a more transformational/response-orientated preaching

What resources will be needed?

Developing materials and studies to support the training.

What venue do you see most efficient for this kind of training?

Maybe the best way would be a regional local, mid- to long-term training course.

Corneliu Constantineniu⁷⁹

Could you please give us a historical background of your ministry?

My name is Corneliu Constantineanu. I have completed a PhD at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and University of Leeds, UK, and now serve as the president and associate professor of New Testament Studies at Institutul Teologic Pentecostal, Bucharest, Romania. I am also the former academic dean of Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Croatia (where I lived for sixteen years), and the executive director of the Areopagus Centre for Christian Studies and Contemporary Culture in Timisoara, Romania. I was the pastor of the International Church in Osijek, Croatia, and now as a pastor in the Good News Pentecostal Church in Bucharest. In addition to my specialization and publications in the areas of Pauline theology and reconciliation, I have a special interest in pursuing a holistic understanding of the gospel as public truth, thus trying to integrate Christian faith with cultural, social and political realities of everyday

⁷⁹ Interview with Corneliu Constantineniu, rector of the Institutul Teologic Pentecostal din Bucuresti, November 10, 2011.

life. Among my most recent books are *First the Kingdom of God. A Festschrift in Honor of Prof. Dr. Peter Kuzmič* (co-editor, ETF, Croatia, 2011); *The Social Dimension of the Gospel* (Romanian Bible Society, 2011); *The Social Significance of Reconciliation in Paul's Theology. Narrative Readings in Romans* (London/New York: T&T Clark Continuum, 2010); *Bible, Culture, Society* (co-editor, ETF, Croatia, 2009); *Encountering the Other: Studies in Reconciliation* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2009).

[Corneliu is married to Ioana, and they have two daughters, Anamaria and Carmen.]

What are some of the changes and/or transformation of religious culture and/or thoughts since the 1989 revolution?

I lived in Croatia for most of that time but I can say that the most important change in Romania was the freedom of Christians to worship and serve in a free society and the challenges that came with this. The churches were not prepared for the amazing opportunities and so it struggled to adapt. What is interesting in Romania is that the society at large has not experienced a radical secularization as for example Czech Republic or Hungary. And this is very significant for the ministry of the evangelical churches in Romania. Another important change is the polarization of society on various social and political grounds and there is a great need for the church to get involved properly in society with a message of love, hope and reconciliation.

Reflecting on the current status of preaching in Romania, what are some of the greatest accomplishments?

I would say that there is an overall improvement in the quality of preaching in the Romanian evangelical churches as more and more people had the chance to get formal theological training.

What are the greatest needs?

I think the greatest need is still for a serious, biblical expository preaching. The majority of preaching is still very superficial and much of it is not biblical.

Reflecting on training strategies for preaching, what are the training resources?

I think there are more and more good books on preaching being translated from English and there are various attempts to emphasize the preaching ministry in churches. Such a resource is the so-called Langham Preaching Romania, which gathers leaders, preachers from all evangelical churches and trains them for expository preaching.

What are the training needs?

I think there is still a great need to develop the preaching abilities of students in formal training programs.

Reflecting on the need for lay preachers training, is it needed?

Yes, it is very much needed, as many lay preachers are being used across the evangelical churches in Romania.

How is it accomplished?

I am not sure we are doing very well on this. There should be training centers in local churches or communities.

What can you tell us about training as local, national and international mission?

Local – I believe it is important to understand training as mission at a local level in which to engage local ministers and leaders, especially the lay people.

National – For those involved at the higher leadership level, there should be some national training centers/schools where more advanced theological and mission logical training should be provided.

International (Europe, USA) – having in mind the multicultural and international societies in which we live now days (globalization trends) but also bearing in mind the international nature of the body of Christ, I think it is important to have international cooperation and partnerships in training and in mission of the church.

Do you see a preaching course for lay ministers helping the current needs?

Absolutely!

What shall be the main focus of the training?

I think the greatest need is for biblical, expository preaching and so the main focus should be at the level of proper/adequate work with the biblical text, and how to move from text to sermon. Also, there is great need to teach fidelity to biblical text, clarity in exposition as well as relevance for the mission of the church today.

What resources will be needed?

I guess books in Romanian dealing with exegetical and hermeneutical skills as well as homiletics books. Also needed are seminars of all sorts of topics dealing with these issues.

What venue do you see most efficient for this kind of training?

On the one hand will be the theological schools where the future pastors are being trained. But also, I think it is crucially important to organize seminars on preaching at community and local church levels where all those being involved in preaching can attend and benefit.

Eugen Jugaru

I have known Pastor Eugen for more than fifteen years.⁸⁰ During the first few years we met at conferences my church offered for the Romanian ministers and their wives. He was identified as a great man of God with a lot of leadership qualities. Along the years we have been laboring together and I know that his input is very valuable giving me insights from the perspective of a pastor and seminary theology professor.

Eugen, would you please give us a historical background of your ministry?

My name is Eugen Jugaru. Since 1996, I have been teaching at the Pentecostal Theological Institute in Bucharest, teaching Pentecostal spirituality and systematic theology and Pentecostal doctrine. I am a graduate of Babes Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, and presently I am in my final stages to obtain a PhD from Lucian Blaga, a Protestant University in Sibiu, Romania. In 1993 I was ordained in the Romania Pentecostal Church, and currently I serve churches in Codlea, Vulcan, Mina 1 May and Holbav, in the region around the city of Brasov. I have been preaching the gospel for the last twenty-five years.

What are some of the changes and/or transformation of religious culture and/or thoughts since the 1989 revolution?

After the revolution a series of interesting changes took place in Romania:

First, there has been an influx of Christian literature available. During the communist regime, introducing Bibles and Christian literature was forbidden by law.

⁸⁰ Interview with Eugen Jugaru, November 8, 2011.

Today, there are many large cities in Romania where you can find Christian libraries and bookstores. There is abundance of books written by Romanian authors as well as authors outside the country.

Secondly, there are a lot more evangelical churches. Right after the revolution there were baptisms when thousands of people gave their life to Christ.

Thirdly, there are a lot of Christian camps available for the youth, we have new Bible schools all across the country and even Christian high schools and universities.

Fourthly, the worship style in many churches has changed. Churches are more open for a more vibrant style with praise and worship team leading the time of worship.

Reflecting on the current status of preaching in Romania, what is the greatest accomplishment?

Preaching in the Pentecostal movement is a very important component of worship. Due to the availability of the resources for sermon preparation, the preaching is more theologically correct in comparison to the preaching before the fall of communism. The preachers are preparing their sermon and do not rely only on spontaneity.

What are the greatest needs?

A great need is finding way to preach so that the truth of the gospel can be applicable to daily life. Many times preaching is theologically correct but does not have any life application. Also it is important to preach messages relevant to the present generation which is different from the 70s and 80s.

Reflecting on training strategies for preaching, what resources are available?

We have books and dictionaries which are available from Christian bookstores. There are also available CDs and DVDs and preaching conferences.

What are the training needs have you observed thus far?

In regards to training, in Romania there is formal theological training at university level as well as Christian high schools at regional level. There is need for lay training because they have regular jobs in factories and being fully employed keeps them from being able to study and prepare sermons. There is need for good professors to come and teach new ways of efficient sermon preparation and form new leaders.

Lay preacher training is needed because in the Pentecostal movement the lay preachers are very active in preaching alongside the pastors. They need a form of theological training so that when they preach the audience understands clearly the biblical message. The way we do training is usually at local level, where the pastors are leading seminars for lay preaching. At the Institute in Bucharest we give high priority to preparing the students as preachers.

Are there any missional aspects of training for lay preachers?

Locally we have group Bible studies and also guided personal studies. Nationally we have the theological training by extension, seminaries and of course the Theological Institute. Internationally we have conferences and also theological forums.

Do you see a preaching course for lay ministers helping the current needs?

Yes!

What shall be the main focus?

YES! The main focus shall be the correct interpretation of Scriptures.

What resources will be needed?

Good professors specialized in teaching homiletics and exegetical preaching. This can be done by conferences, intensive courses and even small group studies.

Octavian Bruma

I chose to use the results of this interview because when the major changes in Romania took place Octavian Bruma was a little child.⁸¹ He does not know of any aspects of the life of the church before the revolution. In the interview he acknowledges this and does not answer the question regarding comparing the church before and after the fall of communism. Pastor Bruma is twenty-four years old and has been preaching since 2006. He preaches regularly at Philadelphia Church in Urziceni. He has been involved in one church planting project.

To the question of the current status of preaching in Romania, Pastor Bruma recognizes a change in the focus of preaching toward simplicity and common interest. There is more topical preaching focusing on youth, family needs and teenagers. The greatest need is for the messages to be clear and easy to be understood by all in the audience, especially in the small churches in the country side. There is too much use of terms not understood and also too much use of allegory.

While there are resources available in the country, there is need for training resources. The preachers in Romania are using different Bible translations and some Bible dictionaries, yet there is need for training on how to use these materials for good sermon preparation. In regards to training, Pastor Bruma states, “A preacher needs inspiration in choosing a biblical text and the theme, but also there is a great need for the preacher to know his audience in order for the sermon to be effective.” In some churches, lay preaching is done by the members of the board and the elders. They need to be trained

⁸¹ Interview with Octavian Bruma, November 4, 2011.

by the pastor on how to put their sermon together. Usually this is accomplished by studying with the pastor a homiletics book.

To the question on the need for a curriculum for preaching, Pastor Bruma sees a value in a course that will equip the preachers with skills to “understand what the original intent of the author of the biblical text.”

Daniel Pop

Pastor Daniel Pop was called to ministry through the work of a German evangelist/missionary who went to Romania after the fall of communism in 1989.⁸² He started Bible study groups with youth in the northwestern part of the country. These young people engaged in ministry through youth camps and then international mission endeavors in countries surrounding Romania. In 1999 they started Youth for Mission in Medias with a membership of six. Today there are twenty-eight fulltime mission workers, three being in fulltime, long-term mission field in East Asia. The group is involved in church planting, works with youth and teenagers and does social work.

Pastor Pop is discouraged by the trend he observes in Romania, where people became disinterested in looking for God, passive and even ignorant to spiritual matters. This is a progression he observes taking place progressively after the fall of communism. During communism being a Christian was a stigma; now there is more tolerance of Christians in the marketplace. He observes this in the ecumenical conversations among different church denominations and confessions (i.e. Pentecostal, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist and Reformed).

⁸² Email interview with Daniel Pop, November 15, 2011.

On the question regarding the greatest needs, I received a surprisingly new opinion coming from a Romanian pastor. He said, "There is need for a correct understanding of the current ideologies. Many preachers rise to preach a message to a *modern* audience, yet the audience is a *postmodern* audience and their approach is assuming that the audience knows the Scripture." From that prospective it is assumed that the audience will receive the authority of the Scripture without the preacher needing to consider making the necessary arguments to sustain the affirmations.

After I finished reading Pastor Pop's responses, my first thought was, "I need to get in touch and get to know him; not only because he understands the needs for some biblical preaching, but he desires to connect with the audience." He is realistic in the importance to know the audience.

Pastor Pop is very critical of the lack of creativity, or the scarcity of it. He sees a need for liberation. That could be accomplished by using modern ways of communication, one of them being films. He makes the case for the fact that the young generation watches a lot of movies and they are used to this form of communication. His target group is youth under thirty!

After reading the answers from Pastor Pop, there is no doubt in my mind that he is passionate about the youth. He would like to see them fill the pulpits in Romania. He would like to see them involved in mission work. His mission is sending youth in mission following natural disasters and organizing evangelism in regions where Christianity was weakened by the communist rule and there are not many churches in existence. The ultimate goal is having youth in short and long time mission work across Romania and throughout the world.

John Tipei

The Reverend Dr. John Tipei is fulltime faculty at the Theological Pentecostal Institute in Bucharest and an associate pastor at Philadelphia Church in Bucharest.⁸³ He earned his master's degree at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary in Cleveland, Tennessee, and his doctor of philosophy degree in biblical studies at Sheffield University (UK). He lived in the United States and was active in the Philadelphia Romanian Church of God in Chicago. After the fall of communism, Dr. Tipei relocated his family to Romania, where he engaged in active teaching and pastoring in Timisoara and then in Bucharest. In 1997, he took a position as a rector of the Pentecostal Theological Institute in Bucharest and in 2010 he became the president.

I chose to interview Dr. Tipei for his vast experience in teaching the current generation of Romanian pastors all across Romania and all over the world. He has traveled and ministered in churches across Romania and in the Diaspora.

What are some of the changes and/or transformation of religious culture and/or thoughts since the 1989 revolution?

During the communist regime there were many Christians who were ashamed of their faith, but today it is fashionable to be called Christian. What did not change is related to their commitment. Without a real commitment they remain just nominal Christians.

⁸³ Interview with John Tipei, November 4, 2011.

In the evangelical churches there are many changes like youth Christian camps, youth conferences, a new more contemporary worship style, more casual dressing for church, influence of western values and opportunities for conferences for pastors, families and missions.

On the mission field we are more involved in the mandate to preach the gospel in the world. We have tens of missionaries on all the continents, and their number is growing. It is our belief that Romania is becoming one of the most missionaries sending countries in the world.

Reflecting on the current status of preaching in Romania, what are the greatest accomplishments?

The preaching is more theologically correct. I give credit to our seminary training at the Institute. There is more and more expositional preaching which brings people into the Scriptures.

What are the greatest needs?

We have a great need for providing instructions for sermon preparation for the lay preachers who do not have theological training. This can be done in short term courses on preaching, seminars and conferences. These educational opportunities will bring about freedom from heretical teaching which still exist in some parts of the country. We wish also that there will be an effort to reduce the number of preachers in churches where there has not been any theological training or divine inspiration on the part of those who “want” to preach.

What are some of the training needs and strategies?

We have plenty resources for sermon preparation. What we need are educators who will lead short-term courses in preaching all over Romania. The main points of instruction shall be: finding the main idea of the text, constructing the message, sermon structure and the application part of the sermon. This can be done by producing instructions on preaching guidelines and seminars can be planned and scheduled all over the country by regions.

This interview was welcome news. Hearing such specific needs spelled out by Dr. Tipei convinced me of the value of the material in this curriculum will have for the future of the lay preaching in Romania. The road from the text to the sermon will enable preachers to find the idea from the biblical text, wrestle with the text and come up with great insights of the author of the text and then a practical application in the lives of the audience, all delivered with passion, clarity and effectiveness.

Articles from *Pleroma*

Pleroma is a journal published in Romanian that has articles written by Romanian church leaders as well as translated material. Following are brief descriptions of articles that caught my interest. Reading this material gave me more insight on the current theological thinking in Romania.

In “Principles of Scripture Interpretation in the Evangelical Theology,”⁸⁴ the author focuses on the authority of Scripture maintaining, that “it has to function as teacher and judge in all we do and think.” The Scripture inspires and corrects doctrine

⁸⁴ Richard Beaton, “Principles of Scripture Interpretation in the Evangelical Theology,” *Pleroma* 3, no.1 (June 2001): 5-16; quote, 7.

and its practice. The authority of the Scripture is connected to the faith that it is the revelation of God to his people.

The belief of the Protestant Church is that “the Bible is the expression of the self-revelation of God and the only norm for the Christian life.”⁸⁵ According to the Reformed doctrine of *sola Scriptura*, the Bible is the only voice of authority addressed to humanity. In this article, Petric points to three characteristics of Scripture as having authority, clarity and being sufficient. As the preacher approaches the text to interpret it, there are three factors that need to be considered. First is the understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit to illuminate the person seeking biblical interpretation. The second factor is the experience of the preacher who filters the text through his life experience. The third factor is the method of interpretation.

“The Holy Scripture containing God’s Word expressed in the past through prophets and patriarchs and synthesized through the books of the Old Testament and in the Gospel of Christ of the New Testament, represents God’s speaking to the world.”⁸⁶ God’s revelation of self was through Jesus Christ with whom we are united through the Spirit of God. Tofana raises the question of this unity. “Through the Word, Jesus Christ is entering a relationship with us. What is the depth of this affirmation? The question is, “In what way are we united with the Person of Christ?”⁸⁷

In Tofana’s view, the causes for inefficiency in our witness to the world are the lack of interest in the Word and unbelief in our approach to the Word, not having the illumination of the Spirit when we read and listen to the Word of God, a separation of the

⁸⁵ Paulian Petric, “Fundamental Principles of Biblical Interpretation of Protestant Theology,” *Pleroma* 5, no. 1 (June 2003): 161-76; quote, 161.

⁸⁶ Stelian Tofana, “The Holy Scripture in a Secularized World: Efficient or Inefficient?” *Pleroma* 8, no. 2 (June 2006): 5-28; quote, 8.

⁸⁷ Tofana, “Holy Scripture,” 9.

Word of God from the Eucharist liturgy and finally it is the belief that the stories and the biblical messages are something of the past and do not fit our contemporary culture.

Vasile Nechita speaks about the Apostle Paul as the author of the oldest testimony of faith for the New Testament church.⁸⁸ He makes reference to the centrality of Christ in the Pauline theology. Paul's testimony "is important exegetically; he is assuring us that through Christ all the writings and the old prophets are fulfilled in Christ."⁸⁹

The centrality of Christ calls the church for mission. The first need of the church is to focus today's preaching on the person of Jesus Christ. This can be accomplished by following the models of the apostolic preaching as found in the Scriptures.

The centrality of Christ helps us understand Christ's love for the church. As it is written in Ephesians 5:25, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." It was interesting to discover the Orthodox view of the doctrine of election. Nechita writes, "Priority shall be given to Christ choosing us not our choosing of Christ."⁹⁰ This is a rather great change in the theological thinking of the church in Romania and a missional message to the unchurched.

Danut Manastireanu tackles head-on the need for reconciliation in the mission of the church.⁹¹ I chose his article because it presents the necessity and the urgency for the church to act on a genuine effort to bring about peace. This article was good for making me aware of this aspect of ministry. In order to have an efficient preaching ministry, there has to be an understanding of all aspects of community life. Apparently, there are still

⁸⁸ Vasile Nechita, "The Centrality of Christ, Mirror in the Holy Scripture and Its Actuality for the Mission of the Church Today," *Pleroma* 8, no. 2 (June 2006): 53-70; quote, 56.

⁸⁹ Nechita, "Centrality of Christ," 58.

⁹⁰ Nechita, "Centrality of Christ," 63.

⁹¹ Danut Manastireanu, "The Proclamation of the Word of God, Foundation of the Mission of Reconciliation in Post-Communist Context," *Pleroma* 10, no. 1 (June 2008): 59-86.

regions where the church did not reconcile with the past era of communist rule. In fact, there are a lot of facts coming to surface regarding church leaders who were communist informers. There is need for apology and finding ways to correct the wrongs that were done and have the church move forward.

CHAPTER 4

PREACHING CURRICULUM

Introduction

The material will be presented in classroom settings, conference rooms and possibly private homes, as recommended by one of the Romanian pastors. The groups will be formed of lay as well as ordained ministers with various levels of preaching experience. We will have a handout copy of a Student Instruction Plan for each of the sessions which will serve as an outline for study notes for the students. Each lesson also will have an Instructor Teaching Plan. Assignments and reading recommendations will be given for each session. Chapter 3 of this thesis serves as an additional resource for the students. I feel that it gives the students some important information to work into their reading and learning.

Each course will be evaluated differently considering the location, number of individuals participating and the level of their preaching experience. The teaching will be organized in ten four-hour settings for teaching plus two additional sessions for sermon evaluations. After each teaching session, as needed, this curriculum will be adjusted to fit the needs of each specific teaching opportunity. Some changes might occur before the teaching event as information about the students will become available to the instructor. At the end of the course, the students will be given an evaluation form for the course. This will enable the instructor to target specific areas of instruction, therefore making the teaching experience efficient and with maximum impact.

In some cases, when extended time is possible, we will also plan to have time for sermon preparation as a group and then individual preaching and class feedback.

Teaching will be done by a team of two pastors/professors. In the beginning, I plan to invite colleagues from Gordon-Conwell Seminary to join me to teach this curriculum in Romania. The plan is to develop the curriculum in such way that it will easily accommodate places where the students will preach. (i.e. country regions and outside Romania).

Each day is divided into two sessions, and each session will have the same format for teaching. The instruction will start with an introduction identifying the material to be studied, followed by instructional goals to indicate the desired outcome of the teaching and then for each goal we will identify the performance objectives.

Lesson 1, Introduction to the Course and the Call to Preaching Ministry

Student Instruction Plan and Instructor Teaching Plan for Session 1

Introduction to the session

OUTCOME: By the end of this session the students will be introduced to who's who in the classroom, the goals and performance objectives of the course and the syllabus.

GOAL: Students will learn about each other, their instructors and the learning project ahead.

OBJECTIVE: The students will be able to engage and become confident they are in the right place, at the right time, for the right reason: God's call in their life to preach the Word!

Goal 1: General introduction of the participants

1. Introduce oneself
2. Introduce the co-instructor
3. Introductions of the members of the class
4. Evaluate the group—general perspective

Goal 2: Introduction of the material

1. Objective 1: Presentation of the instructional goals

- a. Learn skills of sermon preparation from the initial approach and choice of the biblical text to delivery of the message
- b. Anticipate the need to unlearn old habits of sermon preparation
- c. Discover the need to “think about hard thinking” while working through the biblical text.
- d. Discover the need for clarity: “Be clear, be clear, be clear” (Napoleon)
- e. Discover the need for simplicity
- f. Discover the need for efficiency

2. Objective 2: Performance objectives

- a. Use the new skills for a transformational ministry
- b. Preach the Word with conviction, confidence, simplicity and authority
(2 Timothy 3:14-17)

Goal 3: Introduction of the syllabus

Syllabus: Homiletics Workshop for Romanian Lay Ministers
Preaching in National and International Context

Instructor: Rev. Paul Muresan, paulmuresan@verizon.net

Co-Instructor:

Dates:

Times: Morning session 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; afternoon session 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Ten-minute breaks will be given every hour. A fifteen-minute break will be given mid-morning for coffee and refreshments.

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce the students to the concept, importance and skills of exegetical approach to sermon preparation and delivery. We will focus on the steps of preparation for what we will call the journey “from the choosing of the text to the event of sermon delivery.” While there is ample material to cover, there will be opportunities for class interaction, enabling students to engage and learn from each other’s experiences.

Course Objectives

As a result of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Understand the meaning and the importance of their call to the preaching ministry.
2. Define and adopt the exegetical method of biblical preaching.

- 3 Learn how to select the text, investigate the text, ask questions of the text, discover the original meaning of the text and then proceed to assemble the message.
4. Discover and apply the “one idea” principle for clarity of the text.
5. Identify and formulate the homiletical idea.
6. Learn how to structure their sermon in outline form: introduction, main idea, progress, transitions, tension, use of supporting materials.
7. Learn to understand their audience for effective communication.
8. Learn to deliver sermons with confidence, efficiency and maximum impact.
9. Use new strategies to apply their skills in preaching in the context of their mission work.

Textbooks and Reading Requirements

Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2001. Romanian translation.

Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Hand-outs with articles prepared for each particular session.

Course Prerequisite

Since this is going to be an intense course with a lot of material, one month before the starting of the course, each student will be required to submit a document providing the instructor with the following information:

1. Name, address, contact information.

2. Family information: spouse and children.
3. Ministry information: ordained or not, length of preaching experience.
4. One-page story of their *best* preaching experience.
5. One-page story of their *worst* preaching experience.
6. One sermon manuscript/outline.

Course Administration

Attendance: The students are asked to commit to the two weeks of studies with minimal distraction. This is necessary for the continuity and the unity of the group.

Grades, where applicable, will be assigned, but in most cases no grades will be given.

Assistance: The instructors are available one half hour before each session and by email and phone.

Course Calendar

Lesson 1, Introduction to the Course and the Call to Preaching Ministry

Lesson 2, Definition, Purpose and Importance of Expository Preaching

Lesson 3, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Selecting and Studying a Text

Lesson 4, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Getting the Big Idea of the Text, Subject and

Complement

Lesson 5, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Developing Questions and Formulating the

Homiletical Idea

Lesson 6, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Determining Purpose and Helps as It Relates to the Audience; Guidelines for Purpose and Outcomes

Lesson 7, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Preparing Impacting Introductions and Memorable Conclusions

Lesson 8, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Choosing Supporting Material

Lesson 9, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Designing the Outline and Efficient Use of Transitions

Lesson 10, Effective Sermon Delivery

Note: In some cases extended time will be given for this course, and in those instances we will be planning two more days of instruction and interaction.

Sermon evaluations will be based on class analysis and individual meetings with the students. The students will be required to write a manuscript and videotape their sermons. A copy of the manuscript will be distributed in class for each student. Each student will have to submit a written evaluation and critique to at least three other students.

Student Instruction Plan

Introduction of the session

OUTCOME: By the end of this session, the student will be able to understand, affirm and articulate what a call to the preaching ministry is. He or she will understand the “terms of call.”

GOALS: Each student shall understand the diversity and the uniqueness of his or her own call.

OBJECTIVES: The students will learn the specific definitions of the preacher, message and audience, learn and understand the elements of what it means to be called to preach.

Goal 1: Definitions

1. The preacher
2. The message
3. The audience

Goal 2: Elements of the call to preaching ministry

1. Objective 1: God originates the call
2. Objective 2: Understanding the importance of the passion for preaching
3. Objective 3: Understanding the need for mission preaching
4. Objective 4: Understanding and being obedient to the call for mission preaching, “leaving the common for the uncommon”
 - a. Willingness to take challenges
 - b. Personal and family challenges
 - c. Preparation for preaching ministry

Instructor Teaching Plan

Introduction to the session

OUTCOME: By the end of this session, the student will be able to understand, affirm and articulate what a call to the preaching ministry is. He or she will understand the “terms of call.”

GOALS: Each student shall understand the diversity and the uniqueness of his or her own call.

OBJECTIVES: The students will learn the specific definitions of the preacher, message and audience, learn and understand the elements of what it means to be called to preach.

Goal 1: Definitions

1. Objective 1: The preacher, definition and facts

a. Ambassador for Christ (2 Cor 5:20): Ask the students to prepare a devotional based on 2 Corinthians 5:20 and to reflect on the process of preparation and delivery of sermons.

b. Images of the preacher as: herald, pastor and story teller¹

c. *Preacher's Portrait*: a steward, a herald, a witness, a father and a servant²

d. The preacher is a *sower* of seed, and "the seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11)

2. Objective 2: The message, definition and facts

a. The Word of God to his people

b. "That which deals with the total person, the hearer becomes involved and knows that he has been dealt with and addressed by God through this preacher."³

¹ Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 23, 25 and 31.

² John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher's Portrait* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961).

³ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 56.

- c. "The systematic preaching of the Word of God is impossible without the systematic study of it."⁴
- d. "The passage governs the sermon." (Haddon Robinson)
- e. In the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA), we find a great definition of the act of preaching and the significance of the Word. It states, "The preached Word or sermon is to be based upon the written Word. It is a proclamation of Scripture in the conviction that through the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ is presented to the gathered people, offering grace and calling people to obedience. . . . The sermon should present the gospel with simplicity and clarity, in language which is understood by the people . . . the preaching of the Word shall ordinarily be done by a minister of Word and Sacrament."⁵

3. Objective 3: The audience, definition and facts

- a. People in the pews: known and unknown faces
- b. "Preaching involves a personal relationship between the preacher and congregation. The preacher is not like an actor who declaims from the stage, while the audience remains spectators. Nor is he only a herald, shouting his proclamation from the housetops, as it were, a middleman between king and people, while the people remain unknown to him and he to them . . . they belong to each other."⁶

⁴ Stott, *Preacher's Portrait*, 31.

⁵ Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Directory of Worship- Elements of Christian Worship (Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly, 2011), 81.

⁶ Book of Order, 81.

- c. “We must sanctify our ears-listen- to learn to proclaim the message of Christ clearly and to discern how the message is being heard.”⁷
- d. “When we listen, we know when it is necessary to express the same truth in different ways. God himself is concerned with his audience; in his Word, different words are used for different audience: the new birth, redemption, deliverance, atonement, ransom, reconciliation.”⁸

Goal 2: Elements of the call to preaching ministry

1. Objective 1: God originates the call

- a. God’s initiative: Abraham, Moses, the disciples, Apostle Paul . . . YOU
- b. God’s call
- c. God’s gift
- d. God’s plan
- e. God’s act
- f. God’s power

2. Objective 2: Understanding the importance for passion for preaching

- a. “Thus saith the Lord”: prophetic proclamation.⁹
- b. “The Bible says”: Billy Graham repeats these words to draw the attention of the listener to the source and authority of Scripture

⁷ Donald K. Smith, *Creating Understanding: A Handbook for Christian Communication Across Cultural Landscapes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 78.

⁸ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 78.

⁹ 1 Kings 14:11; Isaiah 1:2; Jeremiah 13:15; Ezekiel 24:14; Joel 3:8.

- c. “The gravity and gladness in your preaching,”¹⁰ as suggested by John Piper
 - d. Strive for practical, earnest, holiness in the area of your life
 - e. Make your life a life of study
 - f. Read books written by men and women “who bleed Bible when you prick them”
 - i. Direct your mind and contemplate death. Finality of life brings life into prospective. “Death and sickness have an amazing way of blowing the blaze of triviality out of life and replacing it with the wisdom of gravity and gladness in hope of resurrection joy.”¹¹
 - ii. Effective speakers pay attention to what the listeners are hearing from their words.
 - iii. Consider the biblical teaching that a Christian will be judged with a greater measure of strictness: Hebrew 13:17 and Acts 20:26-27.
 - iv. Consider Jesus as an example.
 - v. Deepen your knowledge of God and walk humbly with the Lord.
3. Objective 3: Understanding the need for mission preaching
- a. There is a dying world across the street and across the globe.

¹⁰ John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 63-66.

¹¹ Piper, *Supremacy of God in Preaching*, 65.

- b. Mission field is: every person, every occasion and any location you have the chance to share God's love with the sinner. "Preachers cross cultures every time they open the Bible."¹²

4. Objective 4: Understanding and being obedient to the call for mission

preaching- "leaving the common for the uncommon" (Abraham's story)

a. Willingness to take challenges

- i. New language- people who talk differently
- ii. New culture- people who live differently
- iii. New church settings- people who worship differently

b. Personal and family challenges

- i. Failure and success- neither is guaranteed
- ii. Finances- status change, more dependent, unforeseen expenses
- iii. Family issues- pressure, adjusting, children, time management
- iv. Accountability- covenant group, accountability partner, "self-accountability"
- v. Old and new connections- maintain old connections and establish new ones
- vi. Other possible dynamics

c. Preparation for the preaching ministry

- i. Education- attend classes, read and do continuous research
- ii. Seminars- investing time to learn from others with similar passion

¹² Zack Eswine, *Preaching to a Post-Everything World: Crafting Biblical Sermons That Connect with Our Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2008), 55.

- iii. Mentors- need for godly experienced ministers to “come along side”

Lesson 2, Definition, Purpose and Importance of Expository Preaching

Student Instruction Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, the students will be introduced to the principle, practice and importance of expository preaching.

GOAL: Each student will be able to define, recognize, evaluate and explain expository preaching.

OBJECTIVES: Each student will be able to identify, define and engage in the practice of expository preaching in the context of their own ministry.

Goal 1: Need for expository preaching

1. Objective 1: Crisis in the pulpit
2. Objective 2: The “why” of expository preaching

Goal 2: Definition of expository preaching

1. Objective 1: Definitions of expository preaching
2. Objective 2: Recognition of expository preaching

Goal 3: Importance of expository preaching

1. Objective 1: Advantages of expository preaching
2. Objective 2: Impact of expository preaching

3. Objective 3: Addressing the objections to expository preaching

4. Objective 4: Recognize Potential Pitfalls

Goal 4: The purpose of expository preaching

1. Objective 1: It presents the power of God.

2. Objective 2: It presents the authority of the Scriptures.

3. Objective 3: It presents the work of the Holy Spirit.

Instructor Teaching Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, the students will be introduced to the principle, practice and importance of expository preaching.

GOAL: Each student will be able to define, recognize, evaluate and explain expository preaching.

OBJECTIVES: Each student will be able to identify, define and engage the practice of expository preaching in the context of their own ministry.

Goal 1: Need for expository preaching

1. Objective 1: Crisis in the pulpit

a. Andrew Blackwood calls it a “loss of prestige.”¹³

b. Factors of decline as stated by Blackwood over sixty years ago are

secularism, immorality and a spirit of distraction. The question we are to ask ourselves is did anything change? Yes it did, but not in a positive direction.

¹³ Andrew W. Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1948), 17.

- c. Haddon Robinson writes, “Preachers are no longer regarded as the intellectual or even the spiritual leaders of their community.”¹⁴
- d. There are very high demands on the pastor’s time. Counseling, visitations, house calls, board meetings, administrative meetings, budget meetings are all competing for the minister’s time leaving less and less time for study and sermon preparation. The absence of balance creates a crisis in the pulpit.
- e. The world is disconnected. In the culture of Facebook, connection is not a face to face presence any longer.
- f. A departure of the glory of God - Ichabod! While the circumstances of people’s lives get more complex, there is a need for good, solid, biblical exposition of Scripture and composition of sermons with transformational impact. The absence of clear, effective and Spirit-led preaching leads to weak Christian witness.

2. Objective 2: The “why” of expository preaching¹⁵

- a. Informs the mind- the audience *knows* and *understands* God’s truth.
Matthew 22:37 speaks about loving God with all our minds and Romans 12:2 speaks of the necessity of renewing our minds as a spiritual sacrifice.
- b. Instructs the heart- the audience *feels* and *wills* God’s truth. Every sermon appeals to the action of the heart.

¹⁴ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2001), 17-18.

¹⁵ Richard Ramesh, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 24-25.

c. Influences behavior- the audience will apply and obey God's truth.

Hearing and applying the Word of God translates into a change of behavior. The Bible was given for behavioral change as expressed in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Goal 2: Definition of expository preaching

1. Objective 1: Definitions

a. Haddon Robinson writes, "Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies it to the hearers."¹⁶ This definition needs to be examined in the class conversation as it defines essential elements of expository preaching is and how it applies in the lives of the preacher and the audience.

b. Bryan Chapell has a similar definition emphasizing the role of the expository preaching to "disclose the enduring principles for faithful thinking, living and worship intended by the Holy Spirit who inspired the text."¹⁷

¹⁶ Robinson. *Biblical Preaching*, 21.

¹⁷ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1994), 31.

- c. Expository preaching is “Bible-centered preaching”- the transmission and application of the meaning of the original text from a particular time and situation into the life of a present-day listener.
- d. Exegesis is the discovery of God’s Word while exposition is the display of it. Exposing the text is done through a correct interpretation of the Scripture, in the light of its context and in a language understood by the audience.

2. Objective 2: Recognition of expository preaching

Expository sermon checklist:¹⁸

- a. It must be based on a biblical passage and, in the process of study the real meaning of the text shall be discovered. It has one main idea and it focuses the attention of the hearer around the central theme.
- b. The meaning of the passage must be related to the immediate and the general context of the passage.
- c. The timeless truth must be identified.
- d. The truth must be elevated around a compelling theme.
- e. The main divisions of the text shall be drawn from the flow of the text.
Flow is very important for the audience to connect and understand the message.
- f. The discovered truth shall be applied.
- g. The audience must be challenged to be obedience and application of the new learned truth in their own personal life. There should always

¹⁸ Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999), 31.

be a “go do it” challenge to the audience. Biblical truth has a life application purpose!

Goal 3: Importance of expository preaching

1. Objective 1: Advantages of expository preaching

- a. Honors the Scripture.
- b. It is based on Scripture and is restricting us to a specific text.
- c. It is effective in feeding the people.
- d. It demands integrity in interpretation.
- e. It is Scripture endorsed authority.

2. Objective 2: Impact of expository preaching¹⁹

- a. Impact on the preacher’s life
 - i. Personal growth in knowledge of the Word of God and the discipline of studying it.
 - ii. Time management for weekly text selection.
 - iii. Balance the choice of texts from your preferences to the preaching of the whole counsel of God.
- b. Impact on the listeners and their relationship with the preacher.

Expository preaching enables the minister to:

- i. Be faithful to the text and the context of ministry thus giving more credibility to the sermons.
- ii. Implement strategy for long term growth. The minister as well as the audience will grow in the knowledge of Scripture.

¹⁹ Ramesh, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 17-18.

- iii. Not target individuals. In the process of ministering, counseling sessions and conversations in the hall ways, the minister knows things about the people seating in the pews on Sunday. It is very important for the preacher to develop the sensibility to not use that information when preaching.
- iv. Avoid skipping over texts that are too difficult or inconvenient to preach. The temptation is great, yet not skipping gives empowerment and eliminates the perception of having a personal agenda in Scripture selection.
- v. Have sermon conversation in ministry context. Some churches organize study groups to further discuss, explore and practice the message heard on Sunday.
- vi. Have a common vision for ministry with the congregation, a central vision statement.
- vii. Enable the congregation to become biblically literate.

3. Objective 3: Addressing the objections to expository preaching

- a. Pastors do not have time to prepare exegetical sermons properly.

Expository work is thinking. In fact as stated by my instructors, it is hard thinking! Ministers who are having a hard time carving time for studying will be more prone to shy away from exegetical preaching.

- b. Pastors do not know how to prepare. This is especially true in countries where biblical education and training was not possible previously.

4. Objective 4: Recognize pitfalls

There are some potential pitfalls. Alfred P. Gibbs gives us a list of perils of the preacher.²⁰

- a. Peril of undue familiarity with divine things
- b. Peril of inconsistent living
- c. Peril of neglecting one's own spiritual development
- d. Peril of callousness to the needs of others
- e. Peril of professionalism
- f. Peril of compromise
- g. Peril of popularity

Goal 4: Purpose of expository preaching²¹

1. Objective 1: It presents the power of the Word God has spoken.

His Word is clear, direct and represents God's redemptive plan for his creation. Paul writes to Timothy with regard to the Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2. Objective 2: It presents the authority of the Word.

The preacher is forced to pursue the understanding of the text and then present it to the audience in such a way that they will receive that same

²⁰ Alfred P. Gibbs, *The Preacher and His Preaching* (Dubuque, Iowa: ECS Ministries, 2002), 125-38.

²¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 30-33.

clear understanding of that same truth. Delivering any other messages will lack authority.

3. Objective 3: It presents the work of the Spirit.

“The technical excellence of a message may rest on your skills, but the spiritual efficacy of your message resides with God.”²² Preachers work hard to investigate and understand the text. The Spirit of God must always be the facilitator for such understanding.

Lesson 3, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Selecting and Studying a Text

Student Instruction Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson the students will be able understand and use the first two steps of sermon preparation: the selection of the text and the study of the text.

GOALS: Each student will be instructed in ways to select a biblical text, plan their preaching schedule and also understand and use tools of text analysis.

OBJECTIVES: As a result of this lesson, the students will be confident and creative in their selection of texts and engagement of textual analysis for the preparation of their sermon.

Goal 1: Stages of sermon preparation: Selecting the biblical text

1. Objective 1: Learn ways of planning the preaching schedule

2. Objective 2: Learn ways of selecting the text

²² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 33.

Goal 2: Stages of sermon preparation: Studying the text

1. Objective 1: Approach the text by investigating it
2. Objective 2: Learn to ask the questions of the text
3. Objective 3: Study the context
4. Objective 4: Investigate the qualities of the text
5. Objective 5: Identify particularities of the text
6. Objective 6: Choose tools for study

Instructor Teaching Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson the students will be able understand and use the first two steps of sermon preparation: the selection of the text and the study of the text.

GOALS: Each student will be instructed in ways to select a biblical text, plan their preaching schedule and also understand and use tools of text analysis.

OBJECTIVES: As a result of this lesson, the students will be confident and creative in their selection of texts and engagement of textual analysis for the preparation of their sermon.

Goal 1: Stages of sermon preparation: Selecting the text

1. Objective 1: Learn ways of planning the preaching schedule
 - a. Some pastors plan their sermons from Sunday to Sunday. This is practiced by pastors who are busy and they “do not have time to plan ahead.” The disadvantage of this way of planning is that

Sundays roll around quickly and limit the preparation time. It also limits creativity and possibility of doing a more extensive research.

- b. Some pastors take time for a retreat and plan sermons for the whole year. This is a great way to plan. It will give direction and vision to the preacher as well as the congregation. Knowing the sermon topics ahead of time, puts the preacher in the position to think, observe and collect material during their day to day ministry. With the technology we have available, we can take notes and file ideas for specific sermons planned ahead. We can collect personal stories, stories of the people who attend our services, news articles, books, magazines, movies, events in the life of the community and the world.
- c. Some pastors preach through the books of the Bible. This is a great way to plan and is highly beneficial for spiritual growth of the congregation and the preacher. It will cause the congregation to become Biblically literate, which is very important. An advantage to this way of preaching is that the preacher is “forced” to preach hard topics which otherwise might be avoided or be perceived as not on his agenda. Another advantage is it will keep the preaching in context allowing for continuity of learning the Scriptures well. A disadvantage might be that it limits in some ways the creativity and the freedom of the preacher.

d. Some pastors use the lectionary. To my knowledge this is not practiced in Romania, but it might be something to be considered. The most popular lectionaries in the Western culture are the Roman Catholic Church lectionary and the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) used in most Protestant churches.

In *Between Two Worlds*, John Stott describes the three liturgical periods of the lectionary.²³ The first period is running from October to December and it is a lengthened Advent season. The Second period runs from Christmas to Pentecost.

The third period runs from the Sunday after Pentecost through September. In this period the emphasis is on Christian living with regards to growing in Christ, ethical, social and missionary responsibilities, and the Christian expectation of the triumphant return of Christ.

“In this way, every year the Church calendar recapitulates the story of the biblical revelation, the Old Testament from creation to Christmas in the period from October to December, the Gospels as they portray the life of Christ from January to May, and the Acts, Epistles and Revelation in the post-Pentecost period from May to September. It also inevitably a Trinitarian structure as we rehearse how God revealed himself progressively as Creator and Father, as Son of God made flesh, and in the person and work of the Holy Spirit.”

²³ John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 213-14.

It is necessary to mention the Eastern lectionaries practiced by the Eastern Orthodox, oriental Orthodox, Byzantine Catholic and the Assyrian Church of the East. Romania is a country with very large number of Orthodox believers; therefore the use of lectionaries will be most recognized in those circles, not in the Protestant churches.

e. Some pastors prefer topical sermons. This is an easier approach to choosing a text but it has more potential for limiting Biblical knowledge. If not careful the minister can be perceived as biased towards topics dealing with personal issues or issues of those in the congregation and that definitely will limit his ministry.

f. Sermon topics influenced by current events in the life of the congregation, in the community or the world. I will give some examples:

My church celebrated its 125th anniversary.

The City of Westminster celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Our church dedicated a weekend as “mission weekend” celebrating our mission outreach.

We observe a tragedy like “September 11” and anniversaries following the event.

We observe a weekend dedicated to the persecuted church in the world.

We called for action to help the regions impacted by hurricanes, floods and other natural disasters.

2. Objective 2: Learn ways of selecting the text

- a. Haddon Robinson writes, “An old recipe for rabbit stew starts out, ‘First catch the rabbit.’ That puts first things first. Without the rabbit there is no dish. The obvious first questions confronting us are: What shall I talk about? From what passage of Scripture should I draw my sermon?”²⁴
- b. Andrew Blackwood believes that most sermons originate in a non-pulpit event. In the context of ministry, the pastor engages the congregation in their day to day lives. It is crucial to know the needs of the congregation. Through that the minister gets to know the struggles, the passions and the longings of the parishioners in his care. He gets to know the youth, the retired, the ones having marital relationship problems, the ones dealing with terminal illness. And he will know that at the end of the week, they will be sitting in the pews waiting to hear from the Lord. Other sources of inspiration are: the seed thoughts of the community, his personal study plan and also his private ideas.
- c. Approaching the first stage of the text requires discernment. The preacher will reserve time for prayer, meditation and also be open and sensitive the Holy Spirit’s direction.
- d. The length of the text will be defined by the clear identification of a literary unit or unit of thought. Haddon Robinson defines it as “The One Big Idea” of the text, which will be the base for each sermon.

²⁴ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 53-54.

Bryan Chapell calls it the “expository unit” and it is defined as a complete thought.

Goal 2: Stages of sermon preparation: Studying the text

1. Objective 1: Approach the text by investigating it.

Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix present the “I’s” of analysis of the text as²⁵:

- a. Instigation- In this stage the question is, “Where do I start?” The minister prepares the people of his congregation and chooses a text that will carry a message to fit the needs discovered.
- b. Investigation-In this stage the discovery is, “What does the text say?” This process requires diligent systematic analysis.
- c. Interpretation- after knowing what the text says, we need to discover, “What does the passage mean?”
- d. Implication- This asks the question, “What does the passage say about God and man?”

2. Objective 2: Learn to ask more questions of the content of the text

- a. Who? - Is the step of looking at the people in the biblical narrative.
- b. What? - Is what is happening, what is said and what is the action of the story.
- c. Where? - Is geographical location, the surroundings and the cultures.
- d. When? - Look at the historical background and time of the action.
- e. Why? - Look at motives, actions and the results of the actions of the text.

²⁵ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 91-125.

f. How? - Looks at surrounding circumstances and how the actions take place.

3. Objective 3: Study the context

a. Literal context- A holistic approach to interpretation is more and more viewed as crucial in circles of contemporary biblical interpreters.

Methods of literary interpretation are:

i. Source criticism- concerned with the written sources underlying the biblical text

ii. Form criticism- pointing to the need to identify the forms of the materials, the structures, the intentions, and the settings

iii. Redaction criticism- views the gospels as they stand as individual entities

iv. Rhetorical criticism- focuses its attention on the relation of form, content, and the structural themes

b. Historical context- The biblical text will be understood as a historical document in order to understand the original intent and its meaning.

c. Theological context- The Bible is a collection of writings telling us about God and his relationship with his people.

d. Cultural context- The Bible relates events in the context of specific cultures. In order to get to the original intent of the authors, we need to know the cultural dynamics related to each specific circumstance.

- e. Language context - As we approach the text the preacher needs to be aware of the grammatical construction of the text, the exact meaning of the text in the contemporary language and also the meaning of the words in the original text.

4. Objective 4:-Investigate the qualities of the text.

Fred Craddock states the qualities of the text being:²⁶

- a. Unity as a necessity for a concrete unit of thought.
- b. Memory as it will create a memorable experience in the life of the listener.
- c. Recognition as listeners will become familiar with the text.
- d. Identification as listeners will identify with the message from the text.
- e. Anticipation as the listener will have a growing expectation of hearing the text in a new and fresh way.

5. Objective 5: Identify particularities of the text

- a. Identify figures of speech.
 - i. Metaphor. In the narrative of the book of Hosea we find Yahweh's relationship with Israel as: husband, lover, fiancé, father, physician, shepherd, etc. This is also found in other sections of the scripture especially in the prophetic discourse.
 - ii. Hyperboles are exaggerated statements for more impact and dramatic intensification of the idea that is conveyed
- b. Identify texts that challenge the preacher and if possible avoid:

²⁶ Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 112-15.

- i. Some texts are odd. The oddity of the text can create challenges for both listener and the preacher.
- ii. Avoid texts that promise more than a preacher can deliver. This can be limitations of the time needed for analysis, or preparation.
- iii. Avoid texts that the preacher is not clear about. The process for a successful preaching ministry requires that God reveals himself to the preacher in the process of preparation and the message is transmitted to the congregation at delivery.
- iv. Avoid texts that can be perceived as targeting certain individuals or situations in the church. This is very sensitive and must be seriously considered. It can hurt the people, not build their faith.

6. Objective 6: Choose tools for study

- a. Bible
- b. Lexicons
- c. Word studies
- d. Dictionaries
- e. Commentaries
- f. Internet
- g. Books
- h. Journals and specialty magazines

Lesson 4, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Getting the Big Idea of the Text, Subject and Complement

Student Instruction Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, the students will be able to understand the importance of discovery and use of the Big Idea of the text in their preaching ministry.

GOALS: In order to adopt and use the Big Idea preaching approach of each text, the students will learn to understand the need for it, identify and define the Big Idea and formulate and use it in the context of their preaching ministry. The end result of discovery of the Big Idea is the ability to state it as the Exegetical Idea.

OBJECTIVES: The students will be able to learn to formulate and use the Big Idea in their preaching. In the process they will work through understanding and using the Subject and Complement as leading elements of formulating the Big Idea.

Goal 1: Each student will be able to recognize the need for finding the Big Idea of the text.

1. Objective 1: Learn about the battle for the mind in the arena of ideas.
2. Objective 2: Good communication requires a single thought.
3. Objective 3: Each sermon is the expanding of the single idea.

Goal 2: Each student will develop the ability to define the Big Idea by studying and comparing different definitions.

1. Objective 1: Idea is derived from the Greek word *eido* which means “to see” or “to know.”

2. Objective 2: Robinson

3. Objective 3: Craddock

4. Objective 4: Ramesh

5. Objective 5: Vines

Goal 3: Each student will be able to look at a text, form and use the Big Idea by the way of identifying the Subject and the Compliment of the selected text.

1. Objective 1: Recognize and define the subject

2. Objective 2: Recognize and define the complement

3. Objective 3: Examples of subject, complement and Big Idea

Goal 4: Preaching the Big Idea in mission context, cross culture and subcultures

Instructor Teaching Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, the students will be able to understand the importance of discovery and use of the Big Idea of the text in their preaching ministry.

GOALS: In order to adopt and use the Big Idea preaching approach of each text, the students will learn to understand the need for it, identify and define the Big Idea and formulate and use it in the context of their preaching ministry. The end result of the discovery of the Big Idea is the ability to state it as the Exegetical Idea.

OBJECTIVES: The students will be able to learn to formulate and use the Big Idea preaching. In the process they will work through understanding and using the Subject and Complement as leading elements of formulating the Big Idea.

Goal 1: Each student will be able to recognize the need for finding the Big Idea of the text.

1. Objective 1: Learn about the battle for the mind in the arena of ideas.

In the 2005 winter edition of *Pulpit Talk*, Haddon Robinson speaks about the battle of ideas to capture the mind of the people. He starts by saying that “5% of the people think, 15% think that they think and the rest of 80% would rather die than think.” Ideas come from thinking. In a world of ideas, the preacher strives to engage the minds of the people and hopes that each Sunday he will be able to find an idea which will capture the hearts and the imaginations of the people in the pews.

Behind each idea are ideologies, principles and factors that shape the lives of the people and cultures. The first twenty-three years of my life, I lived in Romania. Coming through the educational system I was taught the communist ideology and values. Then I came to America and that was a culture shock. The new society gave me freedom to think on my own, to embrace the freedom to pursue my goal for life and most of all, to freely worship God without any constraints.

As I established myself in this new way of life I also discerned ideologies that affect our life in a negative way. One such ideology was the pursuit of the “American Dream” which evolved around what people have as their passion. The person with the most toys wins!

Our youth are shaped by the video games they play, television programs they watch, music they listen to as well as the peer pressure they are subject to every day of their lives.

This gave me an even deeper sense of the competition of ideas for the minds of the people I see in the pews when I preach. That is humbling as well as exciting. It is humbling because I cannot rely on my own understanding and it is exciting to prepare hard, pray hard and throw myself at the mercy of God to use me to meet the people's needs. God gives me the platform to speak for him on Sunday and to represent him in the community the rest of the week. Preaching is the proclamation of ideas!

2. Objective 2: Good communication requires a single thought.

In the process of sermon preparation, the preacher needs to select and latch on the one thought the text represents. In *Between Two Worlds*, John Stott defines the one thought as the dominant thought which shall come as the result of prayer and meditation on the text at hand.²⁷

Zack Eswine gives us some suggestions for finding the Big Idea by looking for parrot words and asking questions of the text. Then he makes reference to the divine moment of discovery which he calls the “ah-ha” moment. Every preacher knows the great feeling of that ah-ha moment when he is aware that it is not his own but it is of divine inspiration.

Getting to single idea is hard and sweaty work, the preachers do it every week. Haddon Robinson states with conviction that if the preacher is not willing to do it, there is nothing he has to say to his congregation on Sunday. That is a

²⁷ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 224-25.

truthful reality and the congregation will know if the preacher did not prepare and will be disinterested.

3. Objective 3: Each sermon is the expanding of the single idea.

While there may be more than one idea in a text, there is only one dominant thought and that is the Big Idea. The preacher will be able to discover it and use it to pursue the building of the sermon around that Big Idea. Throughout the sermon the people will hear the same idea from different angles. The preacher should be able to state the idea in a “short pregnant sentence as clear as a crystal.” This is a statement of J. H. Jowett, quoted by Haddon Robinson.²⁸

“Sermons seldom fail because they have too many ideas; more often they fail because they deal with too many unrelated ideas.”²⁹ This clearly indicates the need for One Idea!

“A major affirmation of our definition of expository preaching therefore, maintains that ‘expository preaching is the communication of *a biblical concept*’. That affirms the obvious. A sermon is a bullet, not buckshot. Ideally each sermon is the explanation, interpretation, or application of *a single dominant idea* supported by other ideas, all drawn from one passage or several passages of Scripture.”³⁰

Goal 2: Each student will develop the ability to define the Big Idea by studying and comparing different definitions.

²⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 37.

²⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 35.

³⁰ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 35.

1. Objective 1: Idea is derived from the Greek word *eido* which means “to see” or “to know.”

2. Objective 2: Observe Haddon Robinson’s concept of discovering the subject to complement the relationship to the Big Idea.

The basic structure of an idea has two elements: subject and complement.

To find the subject we ask the question, “What am I talking about?”

Behind each subject there is a stated or implied question and the subject can always be stated as a question.

To find the complement we ask the question, “What am I saying about what I am talking about?”³¹

EXAMPLES:

Text: “Do not speak harshly to a man older than yourself, but advise him as you would your own father; treat the younger men as your brothers and older women as you would your mother. Always treat younger women with propriety, as if they were your sisters.” (1 Timothy 5:1-3)

Subject: How should we relate to others as we minister to them?

Complement: Treat them as you would members of your own family.

Idea: We relate to others as we minister to them by treating them as we would treat members of our own family.

Text: “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you say, ‘I find no pleasure in them.’ ” (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

Subject: When should we think about God?

³¹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 49.

Complement: While we are still young.

Idea: We should think about God when we are still young.

3. Objective 3: Fred Craddock writes, "A sermon subject is a brief- two to five words usually- phrasing of what the sermon is about, and should be a distillation of the theme sentence. The subject may serve as the title of the sermon, but quite often the subject may serve the one preaching and not the public. For this reason, titles are subjects which are rephrased in order to stimulate interest."³² As we will see in the examples below, the text yields the theme, the theme yields the subject and the subject yields the title of the sermon.

EXAMPLES:

Text: Matthew 5:21-27

Theme: In the church, relationships take precedence over ritual.

Subject: Reconciliation as Priority.

Title: Leaving Before the Benediction

4. Objective 4: Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix identify the main idea as the "Central idea of the Text" (CIT). The central idea of the text is "a 15-18 word past-tense statement interpreting what the text meant then."³³

The benefits of CIT are: structural foundation, mental organization, intentional sermonization and direct reception.

³² Craddock. *Preaching*, 157.

³³ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 130.

The next step after the CIT is transforming the CIT into the proposition of the text which is “a 15-18 word present- or future- tense application of the CIT to the contemporary context.”³⁴

EXAMPLES:³⁵

CIT: Paul Instructed the Ephesians to stop acting like their fellow Gentiles and start acting like Christ.

Proposition: Christians should stop acting like the lost culture around them and start acting like Christ.

CIT: Paul charged Timothy to faithfully pass the gospel to the next generation in the face of opposition.

Proposition: Christian leaders must faithfully pass the gospel to the next generation even in the face of opposition.

CIT: Because of his faithfulness, God encourages Joshua to be strong and courageous in leading the Israelites into Canaan.

Proposition: The people of God can have strength and courage to serve Him obediently because of His faithfulness.

Goal 3: Each student will be able to look at a text and form and use the Big Idea by way of identifying the Subject and the Complement of the selected text.

1. Objective 1: Recognize and define the subject
2. Objective 2: Recognize and define the complement
3. Objective 3: Examples of subject, complement and Big Idea

³⁴ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 134.

³⁵ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 135.

Text: Romans 5:8

Subject: How does God demonstrate his love for us?

Complement: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Big Idea: God demonstrated his love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Text: James 4:13-17³⁶

Subject: Why does James say arrogant presumption about future business plans is sin?

Complement: Because tomorrow is in God's hands not ours.(attitude).

Big Idea: Arrogant presumptions about the future business plans are sinful, because tomorrow is in God's hands not ours.

Other texts to work with the students in the class

1 Timothy 5:1-2

Ephesians 1:13-14

Luke 1:1-4

1 Peter 1:17-19

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

Mark 4:35-41

Goal 4: Preaching the Big Idea in mission context, cross cultures and subcultures

³⁶ *Pulpit Talk* 4, no. 2 (winter 2005).

1. Objective 1: Taking the concept of One Idea Preaching to a culture different

from ours has to be done with careful consideration of the culture and its particularities. Keith Willhite and Scott Gibson write, “Every day our culture sends us signals.” The preachers should be aware and be receptive to those signals. An effective communicator listens and pays attention to what happens in the lives of the people who sit in the pews on Sunday.

When I preach in another country, I am aware of the culture and also the particularities of the worship traditions. I am careful that the message will adapt to the cultural mindset of the “faith community” I serve.

The preacher cannot assume anything!

The safe route for effective preaching remains: embracing a high view of Scripture, do diligent exegetical and hermeneutical work, preach a text centered and audience oriented sermon and with confidence declare, “Thus saith the Lord!”

Lesson 5, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Developing Questions and Formulating the Homiletical Idea

Student Instruction Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, the students will be able to ask the developmental questions of the text and use the results as a base for formulating the Homiletical Idea.

GOALS: The students are going will learn to take the developmental questions of the text and formulate the Homiletical Idea.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to ask the three developmental questions of the text and formulate the Homiletical Idea

Goal 1: Use and apply the developmental questions to the text.

1. Objective 1: Learn to ask the first developmental question of the text, “What does it mean?”
2. Objective 2: Learn to ask the second developmental question of the text, “It is true?”
3. Objective 3: Learn to ask the third developmental question, “What difference does it make?”

Goal 2: Learn to use the results of applying the developmental questions in the formulation of the Homiletical Idea.

Instructor Teaching Plan

Introduction to the lesson

In the process of sermon preparation, we come to a point where we need to select material we will use. We need to make sure that everything we say has legitimate purpose. It is the time to connect the past with the present and explain how God’s truth applies to the lives of the contemporary audience. “Explaining is the element that vaults the supernatural truth of God’s Word into the mind of the listener, thus enabling life change.”³⁷

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, the students will be able to ask the developmental questions of the text and use the results as a base for formulating the Homiletical Idea.

³⁷ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 176.

GOALS: The students are going to learn to ask the developmental questions of the text and formulate the Homiletical Idea.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to ask the three developmental questions of the text and formulate the Homiletical Idea

Goal 1: Use and apply the developmental questions of the text.

1. Objective 1: Learn to ask the first developmental question to the text, “What does it mean?”

This first developmental question is essential. Haddon Robinson says even after you determine the main idea of the text, you still face the question, “Do I have anything to preach?”³⁸ The exegetical idea is required to be tested for meaning, validity and implication. The first question of inquiry is that of meaning. What does this mean?

In this phase we read the surrounding text, we flag things we do not understand, we check the text in the original language, and consult good commentaries.

Preachers need to research the scope and particulars of the text. It is finding what happened in the particular time of the event of the text. Sunukjian calls it the passage outline. In the pursuit of finding facts, the preacher needs to address three essential areas regarding biblical material: understanding, belief, and behavior.³⁹

The question, “What does it mean?” pursues the understanding part.

³⁸ Robinson. *Biblical Preaching*, 102.

³⁹ Donald R. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth with Clarity and Relevance* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 88.

The understanding questions are:

“What do I need to explain? What does this statement mean? What won’t my listeners understand?”⁴⁰

In Sunukjian’s explanation there are some things that are easy for the listener to understand and some that are not. When the preachers explain what is hard to understand, they need to be “picturesque,” avoid dictionary definitions and abstract descriptions. They need to create a visual in the minds of their listeners.⁴¹

Behind each text there is a meaning. The meaning comes through a proper explanation, which can be defined as the process of making something clear or plain and therefore more understandable. Explanation is a fundamental part of expository preaching.

The preacher needs to explain words, concepts and principles. Getting the information to provide explanation is an easy task, but requires work. In this process he uses the resources available to gain the information. Hours and hours of study will give the preacher what is needed for a well informed response to the possible questions in the mind of his audience. The skill, however, will be in presenting the information with simplicity for easy understanding.

The preacher needs also to explore whether there are any cultural and historical data that the present day audience may not be able to connect. All the components of the text need to be explained in such way as to be relevant to the audience.

⁴⁰ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 88.

⁴¹ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 90.

By answering the question, “What does it mean?” we unveil the author’s thought order and we reveal the timeless universal truth behind the scriptural text.

2. Objective 2: Learn to ask the second developmental question of the text, “It is true?”

The second development question is what Sunukjian calls the truth outline and deals with what happens “now” and is a question of belief.

The belief questions are:

“Do we buy it? Why is this statement true? Does the cause-effect relationship hold true? What could cause my listeners not to accept or act on this statement? Do I need to defend and prove this statement?”⁴²

The audience can be biased in the way they hear the message. The message is filtered through their own life experiences.

When the preacher brings up the timeless truth of the text, the first filter of resistance can be that of the audience not seeing the cause-effect connection. In His relationship with Israel, God spoke in many instances conditioning His relationship with them by their obedience and willingness to act on what the Lord asked them to do. We see that same principle in the teaching of Christ and also the Apostle Paul.

EXAMPLES:

2 Chronicles 7

“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, *if* my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves

⁴² Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 88.

and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, *then* I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.”⁴³

Matthew 7

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”⁴⁴

Ephesians 6:1-9

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise—‘so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.’ ”

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord rewards each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. And

⁴³ 2 Chronicles 7:13-15.

⁴⁴ Matthew 7:7-8.

masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.”⁴⁵

Besides failing to buy into the truth because the audience does not see the cause-effect, the second reason for resistance to buy into it could be because it seems contrary to real life.

Some of the Scripture texts mentioned above could also be used for this section. The arguments are, “I did pray and God did not answer! I did ask and I did not receive! I sought answers to what is happening to me and God seems to be nowhere!”

People experience hard issues in life. Trying to explain these issues without a primary concern for the audience could lead to trouble in the pulpit. A careless response can lead to a hostile audience! The people in the audience can listen and argue in their minds and develop an attitude or as Haddon Robinson says, they will use the “clickers” they brought with them and simply turn off the speaker.

A good example for this is Romans 8:28, which is known, memorized and quoted in all Christian circles, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Some will say, I know it, I believe it and it happened to me. Others are waiting for this to be a reality in their own life situation and others simply reject it because they were “let down” by God. They think that not getting the answer

⁴⁵ Ephesians 6:1-9.

from God in their difficult life circumstances was because they were not called by God or their love was rejected. These are heavy issues and cause the people in the pew struggle.

The third reason for audience resistance is because something else is more important to them. “People hold to a hierarchy of beliefs, a ladder of truths. Some values are higher on the ladders than others. They seem more important, they matter more, and some people buy them ahead of others.”⁴⁶

A fourth possible reason could be that the truth seems impossible therefore it gets rejected.

3. Objective 3 Learn to ask the third developmental question, “What difference does it make?”

The third development question according to Sunukjian relates to the sermon outline and deals with the practical application of the take-home truth. It deals with the behavioral aspect, when the audience is challenged to take action and apply the message into their lives.

“Unless the listeners get a mental picture of some real-life situation, the biblical truth remains an abstraction. Unless they see a video running in their minds, the biblical concept remains vague and unhelpful. The message has no apparent bearing on their lives until they visualize some person, event, or circumstance in their everyday world.”⁴⁷

Preaching without charging the people to action is empty and inefficient. The behavior questions are:

⁴⁶ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 101.

⁴⁷ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 106.

“What does it look like in everyday situations? Where does it show up in real life? What are the implications, the practical applications? How exactly, would my people carry this out in the daily events and circumstances of their lives? What can I specifically visualize this for my listeners? What ought to happen? What ought to change?”⁴⁸

To this subject, John Stott dedicated a whole book. He writes about two worlds: the Biblical World and the Now World. The duty of the preacher is to connect the two worlds by “bridge-building.” The practice in some churches is preaching exclusively about one of the two worlds. The more traditional trends are focusing on the biblical times and failing to connect the truth of the biblical times with contemporary application. On the other hand some preaching is shaped by the contemporary settings and lacks depth in understanding the biblical text. There is need for connection as one world cannot exist without the other.

Goal 2: Learn to use the findings of applying the developmental questions for the formulation of the Homiletical Idea.

After the inquiry of the text using the development questions, we are now ready to understand how the exegetical idea becomes the homiletical idea. The one idea of the text becomes the one idea of the sermon. They are not two separate ideas. As we mentioned before the exegetical idea is what the biblical writer wrote to the biblical reader. The homiletical idea comes from the adaptation of the exegetical idea to the twenty-first century hearers. The

⁴⁸ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 88.

homiletical idea is formulated in the twenty-first century language and relevant to the twenty-first century audience.

Haddon Robinson gives four general suggestions on how to formulate the homiletical idea. First is “state the idea as simply and as memorably as possible.” Second is “state the idea in concrete and familiar words.” Third is “state the idea so that it focuses on response.” Fourth is “state the idea so that your listeners sense what you are talking to them about them.”⁴⁹

Jeff Arthurs talks about the four “C’s” necessary to consider in formulating the homiletical idea being: Concise, Compelling, Clear and Creative.⁵⁰

Let’s look at few examples that were given in the same conversation with Haddon Robinson and Scott Gibson.

EXAMPLES:

Mark 13:24-37

Subject: What did Jesus tell his followers?

Complement: No one knows the day of his return but there will be sign indicating the approach of that time, so you need to be on guard.

Exegetical Idea: Jesus told his disciples that no one knows the day of his return, but they will be able to see signs they have to watch for and be on guard.

Homiletical Idea: Watch your life because the signs say the Son of God is coming back for you.

⁴⁹ Robinson. *Biblical Preaching*, 105-6.

⁵⁰ *Pulpit Talk* 4, no. 3 (spring 2006).

Proverbs 11:23-28

Subject: What does the writer say the righteous man is characterized by?

Complement: The righteous man is generous and trusts in God who cares for him.

Exegetical Idea: The writers say the life of the righteous man is demonstrated by generosity and trusts in God who cares for him.

Homiletical Idea: Change people spare the change because the God we trust wants us to be generous.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Subject: Who did Paul say is in danger of falling?

Complement: The man who has been blessed by God but sets his heart on evil things.

Exegetical Idea: Paul says that the man who has been blessed but sets his heart on evil things is in danger of falling.

Homiletical Idea: If you think you stand firm, take heed lest you fall.

NOTE: If time permits, we will analyze in class the following texts pursuing a better understanding of the formation of the homiletical idea:

Isaiah 61:1-11

Galatians 5:16-26

Luke 15:11-31

John 3:16

**Lesson 6, Stages of Sermon Preparation:
Determining Purpose and Helps as It Relates to the Audience; Guidelines for
Purpose and Outcomes**

Student Instruction Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson the students will be able to state the purpose of the sermon they choose to preach and also will have a good understanding of how the sermon will fit the needs of a particular audience. They will gain new skills in knowing their audience.

GOALS: The students will learn to recognize the need for a clear purpose behind their preaching ministry and also will learn to engage the sermon preparation from choosing the text to delivery, considering the particulars of their audience.

OBJECTIVES: The students will be able to preach with clear purpose and maximum efficiency to a variety of audiences.

Goal 1: Defining the purpose of preaching

1. Objective 1: The preacher will ask the question, “Why do I preach this sermon?”
2. Objective 2: Establish ways to set and follow strategies of sermon choice with the audience in mind.

Goal 2: Define the audience

1. Objective 1: Who is the audience?

2. Objective 2: Potential ways the preachers can see the audience through personal filters.

Goal 3: Know and adapt the sermons to fit particular audience types.

1. Objective 1: Develop sensitivity to the audience.
2. Objective 2: Understand the need for audience adaptation.
3. Objective 3: Recognize different audience groups.
4. Objective 4: “Ten Commandments for Hearing.”

Instructor Teaching Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson the students will be able to state the purpose of the sermon they choose to preach and also will have a good understanding on how the sermon will fit the needs of a particular audience. They will gain new skills of knowing their audience.

GOALS: The students will learn to recognize the need for a clear purpose behind their preaching ministry and also will learn to engage the sermon preparation from choosing the text to delivery, considering the particulars of their audience.

OBJECTIVES: The students will be able to preach with clear purpose and maximum efficiency to a variety of audiences.

Goal 1: Defining the purpose of preaching

1. Objective 1: The preacher will ask the question, “Why do I preach this sermon?”

The best practice for preaching preparation is first to listen to the people. Jesus was a great communicator and it is evident from the reading of the Gospels that before he spoke to their condition, he first observed their lives and listened to their words. (Sometimes their thoughts, but he was God!)

From the moment the preacher becomes aware of the preaching opportunity the questions are: “Who will be my audience? What will I preach? and Why?” The questions are all related and the way we answer one affects the others.

The agenda will always be directed by the agenda of God. David Henderson helps us with this by writing, “God’s agenda is to display and to further his kingdom around the globe. It’s call to humanity to bended knee, bowing before him in adoration and devotion and dependence and service. It’s to invite men and women out of the hollow pursuit of living for themselves and into a life consumed by him. It’s to make of his followers men and women of deep trust and character, kind and charitable individuals with whom God is pleased to spend eternity.”⁵¹

The purpose of the preaching event will be guided by what the preacher hopes to accomplish in the lives of his particular listeners, at a particular event in a particular place.

The urgency of preaching will be dictated by a sense of urgency. Each audience is unique. In certain settings there will be people present hearing the Gospel for the first time. Other times, there will be people hearing God for their

⁵¹ David W. Henderson, *Culture Shift: Communicating God’s Truth to Our Changing World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998), 29.

last time. John Piper writes, “All genuine preaching is rooted in a feeling of desperation... wake up on Sunday morning and you can smell the smoke of hell on one side and feel the crisp breeze of heaven on the other.”⁵² This kind of preaching needs the power and guidance of the Spirit of God.

2. Objective 2: Establish ways to set and follow strategies of sermon choice with the audience in mind.

In Lesson 3, under Goal 1 and Objectives 1 and 2, we studied the methods of choosing a preaching text. At this point we need to look at the “purpose” behind all the strategy and the ways we chose the preaching text guided by that knowledge.

The purpose of the text selection is dictated by the audience and the preacher’s goal and desires for his/her listeners. The following could be some ways of purpose planning:

- a. Think through the variety of people in the pew.
- b. Plan short-and long-range teaching material with the purpose of making disciples.
- c. Plan preaching through the Bible, separate book of the Bible or series.

The main scope is deepening the audience’s knowledge of the Scripture.

- d. Advance planning helps focus on seasons (Christmas, Easter), stewardship preaching and some special topics needed for growth in biblical knowledge.

⁵² Piper, *Supremacy of God in Preaching*, 41.

The path for purposeful planning is: assessment, planning, setting goals, breaking the goals in smaller sections for more focus and, then preaching one sermon at the time to meet the purpose. The big picture of purpose planning is disciple making for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

Goal 2: Define the audience

1. Objective 1: Who is the audience?

At any time in the audience we will have one or more of the following: men, women, singles, married, divorced, living together, children, youth, young adult, middle-aged, elderly, unemployed, self-employed, management, committed Christians, cynics, atheists, healthy, sick.

Some will come with high expectations and a hunger to be fed. Some will come because that is what they do on Sunday mornings. And some will come because they had to come.

Some are the seekers or consumers and they come to get or reject something. “The seeker’s choice is not between competing brands of religion, but between submitting to God or denying, between taking God at his word or rejecting him.”⁵³

Some are spectators; they come to watch and observe and have the chance to engage or just stay passive. This is the group which would be the most attractive for the preacher. This group also requires adequate preparation. “We

⁵³ Henderson, *Culture Shift*, 59.

can't make the world believe; but we sure can speak in such a way that the world cannot help but listen."⁵⁴

One more type of person in the audience will be the self-absorbed individual. This is the hardest nut to crack and the greatest challenge for the speaker. The preacher will deal with this type by remaining focused on the task of preaching and insures that he does not get distracted. After all, it is the Spirit of God who does the convicting and the changing of the hearts. Paul told Timothy, just preach the Word!

The reality is that as Haddon Robinson said, the people come to church with clickers in their heads. They will have and maintain the power to turn the speaker on and off. Research says that we channel surf the TV when we have nothing else to do, we are bored, we are lonely and when we are depressed.⁵⁵

Objective 2: Potential ways the preachers can see the audience, through personal filters.

From personal experience I will offer some thoughts I have facing the congregation on Sunday morning; I wonder about their personal spiritual interest. I wonder about their desire to come and be filled for their own personal need. I also wonder if they are present to be fed and have the desire to be charged with power from above to face the world and tell the gospel's story after they leave the service. I wonder if they like me or not. I wonder if I have created an antagonistic relationship with or without intent. If I preach that morning, I wonder if they will be interested in the sermon. I wonder about their walk with God, their experiences

⁵⁴ Henderson, *Culture Shift*, 21.

⁵⁵ Henderson, *Culture Shift*, 80.

in the past week, their dreams fulfilled, their failures, disappointments, and deep desires of the heart. I love stories, and I want to know what their story is that morning? What captures their imagination? What holds their heart? Then I pray God help me hear and see. God use me for your purpose in the lives of your people!

Goal 3: Know and adapt the sermons to fit particular audience types.

1. Objective 1: Develop sensitivity to the audience.

Knowing the audience is essential for connection. Knowing the diversity of the individuals in the audience demands the speaker understand their needs. While it might be easier to know the Christina audience, there is a greater challenge when it comes to non-Christians listening. Bill Hybels addresses the need for integrity of our preaching to secular people in two critical areas. First we need to understand the way they think and secondly we need to like them.”⁵⁶

2. Objective 2: Understand the need for audience adaptation.

Jay Adams wrote a whole book dedicated to audience adaptation in the sermons and speeches of Paul. He observes how Paul used his skills for people on the street, in the synagogue, before the Greek philosophers, mobs, the Sanhedrin, Felix, Festus and Agrippa and before his Christian elders.

The checklist for audience analysis includes: size, occasion for gathering, significant environmental factors, customs and taboos, nationalities, races, homogeneity, political parties, organization, trades, business, profession,

⁵⁶ Bill Hybels, Stewart Briscoe, and Haddon Robinson, *Mastering Contemporary Preaching* (Portland, OR.: Multnomah, 1989), 29-30.

education, social level, economic level, religions, interests, hopes, fears, needs, attitudes toward the subject and attitudes towards the speaker. This is an extensive list. Yet it is necessary to have it as a point of reference in evaluating for whom the preacher prepares the message.

Based on the knowledge of the audience, Adams gives us another list having to do with the modes of adaptation. This is for the benefit of setting the exegetical method approach. The modes of adaptation are: topic, structure, materials, content, arrangements, general style, identification, language introduction, conclusion, persuasive appeal, personal application, testimony, quotations, analogies, illustrations, figurative speech and authority.

As we look at both the list and the modes of adaptation it becomes very obvious that not only awareness but sensitivity and intentionality need to be part of the process of audience evaluation. In the context of mission work the list might be even greater. Each culture has unique opportunities for preaching Christ. Effective preaching requires preaching from within the culture's specifics and not trying to fit that specific culture into a mode that is common to all.

3. Objective 3: Recognize different audience groups.

At any preaching event the variety of people in the audience will fit some categories that will form groups of interest. While they will maintain their own interest, the preacher should still be able to identify the audience's common concerns.

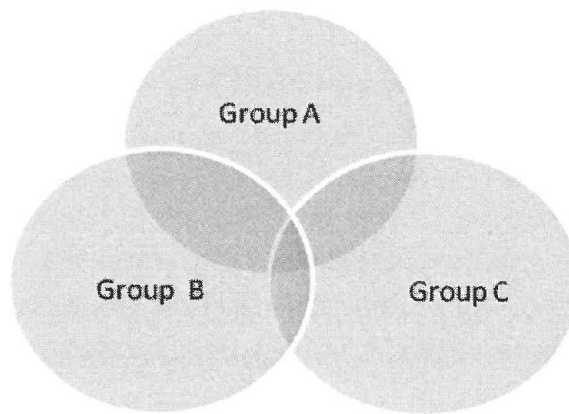


Figure 3. Groups of Audience

The understanding of the presence of these groups will help the preacher narrow his subject and be able to address all groups by focusing on their common concerns; the common concern in our picture is the area common to all the groups.

4. Objective 4: “Ten Commandments for Hearing”

Donald Smith gives us the “Ten Commandments for Hearing” as written by

David Augsburger in *Caring Enough to Hear*. They are:⁵⁷

- a. I will first understand, then judge. I will suspend judgment, postpone evaluation, and defer closure until the other feels heard.
- b. I will not fill in the gaps with my own ideas. I will listen to you, not to my improvements, my embellishments or my supporting data.
- c. I will not assume that the intent in you and the impact on me are one and the same. I will not infer that you said what I heard, think as I thought, meant what I felt.

⁵⁷ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 73-74.

- d. I will attend to your words, your feelings, your meanings. I will not
ramble off, race ahead, or drop off asleep.
- e. I will listen to the whole message, even if I would rather not hear it, see
it, consider it.
- f. I will avoid wishful hearing. I will neither use my ears to hear what the
heart wants to hear, nor the mind to filter what the head will need.
- g. I will test both your meanings and my meanings until they meet. The
content of your words is yours. I want to discover it. The word is
the package, the meaning is the contents.
- h. I will listen to your full statement without using your time to polish my
response or prepare my arguments.
- i. I will not be afraid to listen, to learn, to change, to grow. The listener is
not inferior, the speaker superior; each enriches the other.
- j. I will respect your right to be equally heard; I will claim my right to be
equally heard.

**Lesson 7, Stages of Sermon Preparation:
Preparing Impacting Introductions and Memorable Conclusions**

Student Instruction Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, the students will be able to understand the importance and gain the skill for developing good introductions and conclusions to their sermons.

GOALS: The students will learn the importance, function and role of the introduction and the conclusion of their sermon.

OBJECTIVES: The student will be able to formulate effective introductions and conclusions for their sermons. They will learn the steps of beginning the sermons with powerful and memorable introductions. They will learn to “start with a bang, and quit all over.”⁵⁸

Goal 1: Definition, role, construction and types of sermon introductions

1. Objective 1: Definition of sermon introduction
2. Objective 2: Learn the purposes of introductions
3. Objective 3: Learn what makes for bad introductions
4. Objective 4: Learn types of introductions
5. Objective 5: Chapell’s “Introduction Chain”

Goal 2: Definition, role, construction and types of sermon conclusion

1. Objective 1: Definition of sermon conclusion
2. Objective 2: Learn the purposes of conclusions
3. Objective 3: Learn what makes a good and a bad conclusion
4. Objective 4: Learn types of conclusions

Instructor Teaching Plan

Introduction to the lesson

⁵⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 165.

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, the students will be able to understand the importance and gain the skill for developing good introductions and conclusions to their sermons.

GOALS: The students will learn the importance, function and role of the introduction and the conclusion of their sermon.

OBJECTIVES: The student will be able to formulate effective introductions and conclusions for their sermons. They will learn the steps of beginning the sermons with powerful and memorable introductions. They will learn to “start with a bang, and quit all over.”

Goal 1: Definition, role, construction and types of sermon introductions

1. Objective 1: Definition of sermon introduction

The introduction of the sermon is essential for the preaching event. Listing fourteen different ways of introduce a sermon Andrews Blackwood calls them “sermon gates.” As these gates open we get the first impression of the sermon. It is believed that the speaker has about twenty seconds to get the attention of the audience. That is why Haddon Robinson calls the introduction “starting with a bang.”⁵⁹

2. Objective 2: Learn the purposes of introductions

- a. A good introduction introduces us to the sermon theme, topic, and idea of the text. The introduction needs to lead us to the text. It has to be appropriate, and related to the text. It brings forth the proposition of the text, establishes relevancy, and states the

⁵⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 165.

expectations for the text. As you can see, the introduction is very important and needs to be given proper attention. Some suggest that writing it down, rehearsing and memorizing the introduction will serve best.

- b. Another purpose of the introduction is to raise a need by giving a reason the listener is to listen. People could ask themselves, “Why should I listen to what the preacher has to say?” Haddon Robinson writes, “Sermons catch fire when flint strikes steel. When the flint of a person’s problem strikes the steel of the Word of God, a spark ignites that burns in the mind. Directing our preaching to people’s needs is not merely a persuasive technique; it is the task of ministry.”⁶⁰
 - i. A good introduction commands attention. Bryan Chapell calls it an arresting thought, “An introduction should present listeners with an arresting thought that draws them away from apathy and competing interests and makes the say, ‘Hey! I need to hear this.’”⁶¹
 - ii. A good introduction sets the tone of the sermon.
 - iii. A good introduction is relevant. It comes from real life situation and allows people to identify with the story.
 - iv. A good introduction creates tension which is then carried through in the rest of the delivery act.

⁶⁰ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 170.

⁶¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 239.

- v. A good introduction stirs curiosity. Curiosity gets people's attention. Jesus used this mode of introducing his teaching by using a surprising question or saying something out of ordinary. The Apostle Paul did the same and used it effectively.
- vi. A good introduction raises a question in the mind of the listeners. The most important thing to do is to make sure that they will receive an answer to that question.
- vii. The delivery of the introduction is critical. The preacher will step up showing confidence and his body language should communicate that he is in control. He should not hurry. Relax and use pauses to gain attention.

3. Objective 3: Learn what makes for bad introductions.

- a. Overreaching. In Haddon Robinson's words, "The preacher scare more rabbits that he can shoot."
- b. Starting with an apology like, "I am too tired, I did not have time to prepare," can be deadly. It sends the message that you would prefer not to be there and that will make the audience wonder why they should consider listening to you.
- c. Humor can be a bad way to introduce a sermon. If used it has to be used with special care. Using humor extensively could cause the audience to turn the speaker down for "trying to be a stand-up comedian." Also considering the topic of the sermon should be a

priority. If the topic is heavy and will challenge the audience, starting with a joke will betray the expectations.

- d. Personal stories are powerful introductions. A careful consideration should be given to the fact that the “preacher cannot always be on the sunny side.” Sometimes preachers are defeated, do not get the answers they are looking for and suffer disappointments. The preacher is not the hero.
- e. A bad introduction is one that is too long and winding. The best length is about 10% of the sermon time.

4. Objective 4: Learn types of introductions

- a. Human-interest account. A personal story connects the audience with the speaker. Every sermon is in some sense a disclosure of the personal life and identity of the preacher.
- b. Simple assertion
- c. Startling statement. This can be a great way to “jerk the attention” of the audience. The preacher needs to make sure the audience will not get stuck in that statement. I once preached from Luke 15 and I chose to do a first person story impersonating the older son. My first statement was, “I hate my father.” I thought the sermon went well and I got some good feedback, just to discover few weeks later that some of our parishioners were still wondering what kind of relationship I have with my dad. If a preacher makes a startling

statement like that he needs to make sure that it gets clarified in the delivery.

- d. Provocative question. When the preacher asks a question, he challenges the audience to think and wait for the answer. The provision of the answer is mandatory!

5. Objective 5: Chapell's "Introduction Chain"

- a. Arouse interest
- b. Introduce the subject
 - i. Prepare the proposition's concept. "The proposition is actually a summary of the introduction as well as a thematic statement of the sermon's subject."⁶²
 - ii. Prepare the proposition's terms
- c. Make it personal
 - i. Identify the reason for the sermon
 - ii. State the Fallen Condition Focus
 - iii. Make each one need to hear
- d. Bond to Scripture
- e. Attach the proposition

Goal 2: Definition, role, construction and types of sermon conclusion

1. Objective 1: Definition of sermon conclusion

The conclusion of the sermon reinforces the proposition and reviews its relevancy to the audience. It is the take-home charge to the hearers. The

⁶² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 243.

development of a good conclusion is even harder than the introduction. Some preachers are going around and around in circles like a plane in the fog without the ability to land, others are ending too abruptly surprising their audience. Landing on the first approach is desirable and the success of that depends on preparation and concentration.

In the planning of the conclusion the preacher needs to make sure the conclusion is appropriate, short, and personal. J. H. Jowett calls it “wooing note.”

2. Objective 2: Learn the purposes of conclusions

George E. Sweazey identifies four purposes of conclusions:⁶³

- a. The conclusion gives the preacher the way to present the last impression of the sermon. After the careful work through the text, the preacher shall use the conclusion for one more clear statement of the idea of the text. Is not merely a repetition or summary but it is one more glimpse of the truth presented.
- b. A good conclusion can make the sermon memorable. This is true, yet there shall be caution that the conclusion will not overwhelm the idea and the theme of the text. People shall not walk away ~~remember more the conclusion than the sermon's message.~~ A lasting impression of a sermon will depend on the conclusion of the sermon.
- c. The conclusion shall point to the desired result of the preacher's intent.
- d. A good conclusion may bring the sermon to an impressive climax.

3. Objective 3: Learn what makes a good and a bad conclusion

⁶³ George E. Sweazey, *Preaching the Good News* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1976.), 99.

Some good ways to conclude the sermon:

- a. Give truthful cues. Some preachers close their Bibles early giving the audience the clue that he will finish. Some say, “in conclusion” and then they go on and on taking too long to finish.
- b. Give one conclusion. More than one conclusion is like trying to land multiple times. A clear statement of the central proposition and a summary of the main points is a good way to finish.
- c. Use variety. It is important to change style and the types of conclusion and make it unpredictable.
- d. Bring together application and implications. The preacher shall challenge the audience for practical application of the truth conveyed in the sermon in their personal life.
- e. Tell a final story to illustrate the main idea of the text. The story has to be credible and relate to the audience.

Some bad ways to conclude the sermon:

- a. Never introduce new material.
- b. Never apologize.
- c. To end the sermon using humor is not acceptable.

4. Objective 4: Learn types of conclusions

Andrew Blackwood suggests nine types of conclusions:⁶⁴

- a. Direct appeal
- b. Practical application
- c. Final summary

⁶⁴ Blackwood, *Preparation of Sermons*, 163-67.

- d. Contrasting truth
- e. The appeal to imagination
- f. The closing poem
- g. The closing illustration
- h. Missing conclusion
- i. Final sentence

Lesson 8, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Choosing Supporting Material

Student Instruction Plan

Introduction to the Lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, the students will be able to identify and use efficiently supporting materials in the construction of their sermons.

GOALS: Each student will be instructed to identify and define the functional questions of the supporting material, identify, define and apply the supporting materials, and know the purpose and efficient use of illustrations.

OBJECTIVES: By the end of this lesson, the students will use supporting material with efficiency in constructing memorable sermons.

Goal 1: Identify and define the four functional questions of the supporting material.

- 1. Objective 1: Know what needs to be explained
- 2. Objective 2: Know what needs to be proved
- 3. Objective 3: Know what needs to be applied

4. Objective 4: Know what needs to be amplified

Goal 2: Identify, define, and apply the supporting materials.

1. Objective 1: Repetition

2. Objective 2: Restatement

3. Objective 3: Explanation

4. Objective 4: Definition

5. Objective 5: Factual information

6. Objective 6: Quotation

7. Objective 7: Narration

8. Objective 8: Illustrations

Goal 3: Purpose and use of illustrations

1. Objective 1: Purpose of illustrations

2. Objective 2: Types and characteristics of illustration

3. Objective 3: Sources of illustrations

4. Objective 4: The effectiveness of illustrations

5. Objective 5 Cross cultural use of illustrations

Instructor Teaching Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, the students will be able to identify and use efficiently supporting materials in the construction of their sermons.

GOALS: Each student will be instructed to identify and define the functional questions of the supporting material, identify, define and apply the supporting materials, and know the purpose and efficient use of illustrations.

OBJECTIVES: By the end of this lesson, the students will use supporting material with efficiency in constructing memorable sermons.

Goal 1: Identify and define the functional questions of the supporting material.

Duane Litfin writes about two kinds of functional questions. The first category is the informative function which has to do with explanation, clarity, amplification and demonstration of your point. The second category is the persuasive function which has to do with proof by providing clarification and evidence.⁶⁵

1. Objective 1: Know what needs to be explained.

After the selection of the text, and in the process of studying, the preacher will find words, concepts and things from the text that need to be explained. He will use dictionaries, original resources, and other sources for investigating the text.

2. Objective 2: Know what needs to be proved.

After the discovery of what needs to be explained, there is the burden of proof. Is it true? The preacher needs to use hard facts and make the case for the validity of the message.

3. Objective 3: Know what needs to be applied.

⁶⁵ Duane Litfin, *Public Speaking: A Handbook for Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 197.

The truth of the text not only needs to be explained and proven, but it has to be applied. Every sermon has a practical application.

4. Objective 4: Know what needs to be amplified.

The amplification helps add the support needed for clarification of the text and uses elements like explanation, argumentation, application, and illustration.

Goal 2: Identify, define, and apply the supporting materials.

1. Objective 1: Repetition

Repetition is used to reinforce the idea of the text. It can be done in the transitions from one section to another. Repetition uses the same words.

2. Objective 2: Restatement

Restatement is not repetition. It is saying the same thing using different words. The advantage of restatement is providing more clarity for the audience. Saying it more than one time enables the audience to understand and remember the truth more easily.

3. Objective 3: Explanation

The explanation is needed for clarity. "Explanation is the element that vaults the supernatural truth of God's Word into the mind of the listener, thus enabling life change."⁶⁶ Explanation "sets boundaries by amplifying the relation of one idea to another or what an idea implies."⁶⁷

4. Objective 4: Definition

⁶⁶ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 176.

⁶⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 163.

The definition “establishes what must be included and excluded by a term or statement.”⁶⁸ Definition is necessary for the clarification of the specifics regarding the truth conveyed.

5. Objective 5: Factual information

Factual information “consists of observations, examples, statistics, and other data that may be verified apart from the preacher.”⁶⁹ People love facts. The more they are provided with data, the more they are willing to give credibility.

6. Objective 6: Quotation

There are advantages and also some cautions for the use of quotations. Valid reasons for using quotations are bringing the support of credible sources affirming what the sermon says, providing information for the congregation as they learn what others are saying about the truth of the text, and quotations can add color, variety, drama, force, excitement and cause the sermon to be memorable.

Some cautions are: quotations should be used sparingly; they can be seen as a show-off in the minds of the listeners, and need to be made exact for credibility. The preacher should be careful about using preacher’s clichés, anecdotes, and references to himself and or allusions to persons in the congregation. Negative illustrations should be avoided.

7. Objective 7: Narration

⁶⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 163.

⁶⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 163.

Narration “describes who did what to whom with what effect in the biblical accounts. It can be used to supply background in a sermon by discussing the history, settings, or personalities involved in a passage.”⁷⁰

8. Objective 8: Illustrations

Illustrations “restate, explain, prove, or apply by relating them to tangible experiences.”⁷¹

Goal 3: Purpose and use of illustrations

1. Objective 1: Purpose of illustrations

Illustrations give place for imagination; brings clarity and connects the audience with the theme of the sermon. Illustrations are very important and in the process of selection the preacher needs to be very careful to use one that is closest to the theme and idea of the text for a clearer understanding. The illustration supports and complements the idea of the text.

2. Objective 2: Types and characteristics of illustrations

Illustrations need to be: familiar, persuasive, colorful, believable, and visible. When we say that something is familiar we imply that it is part of our day to day life. A familiar illustration connects the lives and the stories of the people in the audience. Persuasive means that an illustration stirs the people to action. They are challenged to decide something. Colorful illustrations stand for variety. Believable means they need to be true so that the audience will see it possible.

⁷⁰ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 163.

⁷¹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 163.

And lastly, a visible illustration stands for the ability to put pictures in the minds of the listeners.

3. Objective 3: Sources for Illustrations

Sources for gathering illustrations are: Bible, events, personal reading, personal experience, nature, history, internet, other sermons, literature other than Scripture, imagination, and many others. The way sermon illustrations are gathered defers from one preacher to another. Some preachers scribble words on pieces of paper and file them away by themes for a later use. A well known preacher in Southern California has a team of people helping research sermon material.

4. Objective 4: The effectiveness of illustrations

Haddon Robinson suggests five levels of effectiveness and impact of the illustrations.⁷² They are reflected in Figure 4.

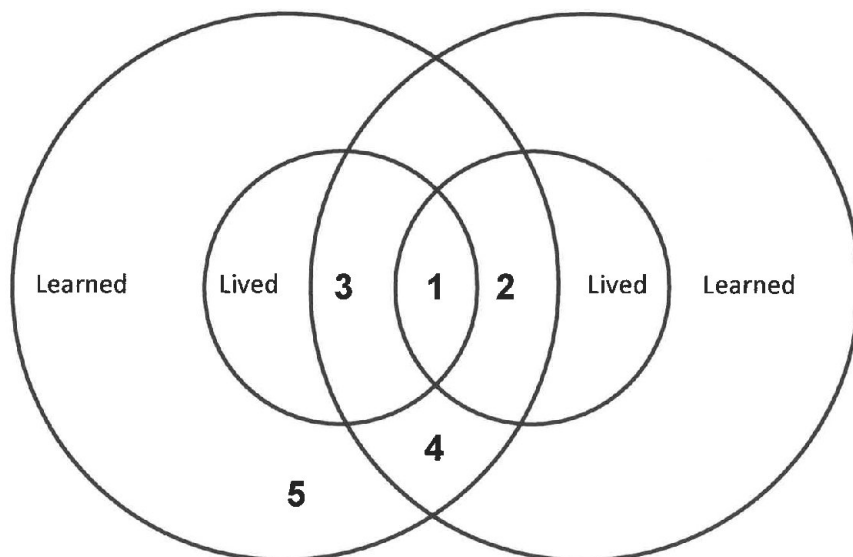


Figure 4. Five Levels of Illustration Impact

⁷² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 156.

5. Objective 5: Cross-cultural use of illustrations

Illustration must be chosen and handled very careful in a cross-cultural setting. The preacher needs to know the symbolism and the total cultural particularities where they minister. If the preacher is not familiar with that particular culture he should inquire or ask a native. Words, gestures, stories accepted in one tradition can be offensive in others. A bad illustration will guarantee the failure of the preaching event and the rejection of message.

Lesson 9, Stages of Sermon Preparation: Designing the Outline and Efficient Use of Transitions

Student Instruction Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson the students will be able to understand the need, the elements and the construction of good effective outlines. In the construction of outlines, they will also use good transitions to assure a good flow and unity of the sermon.

GOALS: The students will learn to identify the sections of the text and write outlines connecting them together. They will learn to define and gain skills to use transitions to construct outlines.

OBJECTIVES: Students will put together outlines and use transitions effectively.

Goal 1: Define, identify, and learn the elements and types of outlines.

1. Objective 1: What is an outline?

2. Objective 2: Identify the need for sermon outline

3. Objective 3: Elements of a good outline

4. Objective 4: Types of outlines

5. Objective 5: Outline samples

Goal 2: Define, identify, and know the functions of the transitions.

1. Objective 1: What is a transition?

2. Objective 2: Functions of transitions

3. Objective 3: Examples of transitions

Instructor Teaching Plan

Introduction to the lesson

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson the students will be able to understand the need, the elements and the construction of good effective outlines. In the construction of outlines, they will also use good transitions to assure an even flow and unity of the sermon.

GOALS: The students will learn to identify the sections of the text and write outlines connecting them together. They will learn to define and gain the skills to use transitions to construct outlines.

OBJECTIVES: Students will put together outlines and use transitions effectively.

Goal 1: Define, identify, and learn the elements and types of outlines.

1. Objective 1: What is an outline?

The outline or the design of a sermon is “the arrangement and coordination of the main body of a sermon according to two or more divisions that support the development of the given proposition.”⁷³ The outline is not for the audience, but for the preacher. The outline will enable the preacher to organize his sermon. A good flowing sermon will then benefit the audience. Once the preacher gets the structure down, the sermon will have a natural flow.

2. Objective 2: Identify the need for sermon outline

The outline is designed to give the sermon unity, order, symmetry and progress. For the unity of the sermon, the preacher should look at the whole sermon and see how different sections need to be connected. The order is with regard to how different parts of the sermon relate to each other and the whole sermon. This clarifies the relationship between the parts. Symmetry relates to equality and proportion between the parts of the sermon. It also crystallizes the order of ideas for correct sequence. Progress means movement. The progress should keep the sermon moving toward the climax and the destination of the sermon.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes, “My basic contention is that the essential characteristics of a sermon is that it has a definite form and that it is this form that makes it a sermon.”⁷⁴

3. Objective 3: Elements of a good outline


The elements of a good outline are:⁷⁵

- a. The outline should have a strong, clear relationship to the title.

⁷³ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 148.

⁷⁴ Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 72.

⁷⁵ Ramesh, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 184-85.

- 
- b. Each major point should discuss only one aspect of the title or theme.
 - c. Each major point should be distinct from other points.
 - d. Each major point should be written as a complete sentence.
 - e. Each major point should be written in the present tense.
 - f. Each major point should have approximately equal value in the development of the sermon.
 - g. Each major point should be organized in whatever order and style (e.g. logical, poetic) will best communicate the textual interpretation to a particular congregation.
 - h. The outline should contain specific rather than general wording.
 - i. Each major point should have a textual basis.

4. Objective 4: Types of outlines

There are two types of outlines. The first type is related to the textual interpretation and is used in the process of sermon preparation and interpretation. In this category we have: the passage outline, the truth outline and the sermon outline. The second type relates to the structure of the sermon. In this category we have the inductive and the deductive outline used for drawing the inductive and, respectively, the deductive sermons.

The passage outline is built from the text and reflects “what happened.” It takes the text as it was written by the writer for the biblical audience in the biblical times. The preacher needs to read the passage carefully, discover the main idea, discover the sections of the text and use his exegetical skills to compose the outline reflecting the main idea of the text.

The second type of outline is the truth outline, and it describes “what happens.” As we learned previously, the preacher applies the truth of the text found in the study of the passage and asks the question “Is that true?” The task is applying the timeless truth of the passage.

After defining the timeless truth and its present validity, the next step is the application step. This is what will determine the sermon outline and it shows “what is happening.” This represents the take-home truth of the sermon message.

The first structural outline type is the deductive outline. In the deductive arrangement, “the idea appears as part of the introduction, and the body explains, proves, or applies it.”⁷⁶

The second structural outline type is the inductive outline. In the inductive arrangement, “the introduction introduces to us only the first point in the sermon, then with a strong transition each new point links to the previous point until the idea emerges in the conclusion.”⁷⁷

5. Objective 5: Outline samples

a. Deductive pattern⁷⁸

Text: Acts 2:42-47

Introduction:

- i. In order to be the church God wants us to be, we need to know the goals or purposes of a church.
- ii. Today we’re going to look at the activities of the early church in order to see what God intends a church to do.

⁷⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 136.

⁷⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 136.

⁷⁸ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 145.

iii. We're going to see that the purposes of a church are to instruct, fellowship, worship and organize.

iv. Please turn to Acts 2:42-47.

I. The purpose of a church is to instruct.

II. The purpose of the church is to fellowship.

III. The purpose of the church is to worship.

IV. The purpose of the church is to evangelize.

b. Inductive pattern⁷⁹

Text: Mark 4:35-41

Introduction

i. Sometimes we obey God and the bottom falls out of everything.

ii. We despair and wonder, "God, why is this happening, and what do you want me to do?" [The second half of the question is the key topic/question: 'What should we do when obeying God leads to difficulty?']

iii. Today we'll see the disciples in a similar situation and learn why such things happen and what our response should be.

iv. Please turn to Mark 4:35-41.

I. The disciples obey Jesus and find themselves in a life-threatening storm that fills them with despair (Mark 4:35-38).

⁷⁹ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 151-52.

II. The reason such things happen may be that Satan is attempting to prevent God's purposes.

III. When obedience leads to difficulty, resist Satan's efforts and trust in God's power.

Goal 2: Define, identify, and know the functions of the transitions.

1. Objective 1: What is a transition?

"Transition not only ties the components of a sermon together but also signals progress and direction to listeners. But the job of transitions is not merely to point forward. They must also relate present matters to previous discussion."⁸⁰

2. Objective 2: Functions of transition

Transitions assure a smooth movement of thought through the sermon and create an easier understanding for the audience. It bridges the parts together and shows progression of thought. The audience will need less effort to stay with the preacher during delivery.

Transitions "enable the preacher to: review the theme of the sermon without monotony, progress without hurdles, connect parts without confusion, remember the sermon without memorization and preserve the planned structure of the sermon."⁸¹

3. Objective 3: Examples of transitions⁸²

a. Knitting statements

"Not only . . . but also" used for progression.

⁸⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 261.

⁸¹ Ramesh, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 111.

⁸² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 262-65.

“Next” is a word indicating progression from a section to the next.

b. Dialogical questions

Ask a question to stimulate further conversation.

Rhetorical questions can be used as well.

c. Numbering and listing

The preacher announces ideas by saying, first, second, third.

The list works in the same way.

d. Picture painting

In some case an image is used in the sermon. Transitions will move from describing one thing from the picture to another in that same picture.

Lesson 10, Effective Sermon Delivery

Student Instruction Plan

Introduction to the lesson

At the beginning of our course, the stated outcome was to prepare the student to know how to prepare and deliver an expository sermon. In *Biblical Preaching*, Dr. Robinson gives us psychologist Albert Mehrabian’s formula on how the use of the eyes, hands, face and feet influence our communication effectiveness, in the following percentage break down: 7% of message comes through to the listener through the preacher’s words; 38% from his/her voice; 55% from his/her facial expression.

That means 93% percent of a successful sermon! What is important to know is that the 93% will not be effective without the 7%, which stands for good, solid and clear delivery of the sermon.

Here are some words of encouragement! You are speaking God's Word. It is he who gives you the message first. The purpose of the sermon is to edify his people and enable them to get closer to him.

When you decide on the passage, the Lord directs you. Knowing that the Word of God is alive and powerful, you have the assurance that the Spirit of God is behind it. In Romans 1:16, the Apostle Paul writes, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew then for the Gentile."

After careful study and working through the text, you will need to allow God to use you in the delivery. Be the channel through which God is blessing the church!

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, student will understand the importance of good sermon delivery and they will apply these new skills which will improve their ministry through preaching clear, effective and life changing sermons.

GOALS: Each student will be instructed in how to prepare for delivery, the nonverbal elements of delivery, the verbal communication and also the ways to get feedback for improvement.

OBJECTIVES: As the result of this lesson the students will be confident and creative in their delivery, discarding old ineffective practices and applying new skills.

Goal 1: Learn how to prepare for delivery

1. Objective 1: Pray.
2. Objective 2: Become *very* familiar with the manuscript by rehearsing and memorizing the content.
3. Objective 3: Get a good night's sleep.
4. Objective 4: Eat a balanced and healthy breakfast.
5. Objective 5: Arrive in time (reserve time to be with the ministry team and also a time to focus alone).
6. Objective 6:-Warm-up your vocal cords.

Goal 2: Learn the nonverbal elements of delivery.

1. Objective 1: Groom and dress.
2. Objective 2: Relax and show confidence.
3. Objective 3: Using or not using the pulpit.
4. Objective 4: Limit and coordinate movement and gestures (spontaneous, definite, varied, well timed).
5. Objective 5: Eye contact—speak to the whole congregation.
6. Objective 6: Smile and act natural.

Goal 3: Learn elements of delivery and verbal communication.

1. Objective 1: Spontaneity
2. Objective 2: Humor
3. Objective 3: Authenticity
4. Objective 4: Passion and enthusiasm
5. Objective 5: Simplicity: clear, short sentences, well paced (allow people to think), pause, tone of voice

Goal 4: Sermon evaluation

1. Objective 1: Self-evaluation
2. Objective 2: Peer evaluation
3. Objective 3: Congregational evaluation

A survey evaluation can be found in Appendix 3.

Instructor Teaching Plan

Introduction to the lesson

At the beginning of our course, the stated outcome of it was to prepare the students to know how to prepare and deliver an expository sermon. In *Biblical Preaching*, Dr. Robinson gives us psychologist Albert Mehrabian's formula on how the use of the eyes, hands, face and feet influence our communication effectiveness, in the following percentage break down:

7% of message comes through to the listener through the preacher's word

38% from his/her voice

55% from his/her facial expression

That means 93% percent of a successful sermon! What is important to know is that the 93% will not be effective without the 7%, which stands for good, solid and clear delivery of the sermon.

Here are some words of encouraging! You are speaking God's Word. It is he who gives you the message first. The purpose of the sermon is to edify his people and enable them to get closer to Him.

When you decide on the passage, the Lord directs you. Knowing that the Word of God is alive and powerful, you have the assurance that the Spirit of God is behind it. In Romans 1:16, the Apostle Paul writes, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew then for the Gentile.”

After careful study and working through the text, you will need to allow God to use you in the delivery. Be the channel through which God is blessing the church!

OUTCOME: By the end of this lesson, students will understand the importance of good sermon delivery and they will apply these new skills which will improve their ministry through preaching clear, effective and life changing sermons.

GOALS: Each student will be instructed in how to prepare for delivery, the non-verbal elements of delivery, the verbal communication and also the ways to get feedback for improvement.

OBJECTIVES: As the result of this lesson the students will be confident and creative in their delivery, discarding old ineffective practices and applying new skills.

Goal 1: Learn how to prepare for delivery.

1. Objective 1: Pray.

Prayer is an essential element of sermon preparation. The preacher’s heart is like a blank page lying bare before the eyes of God. In humility and desperation, the preacher searches the heart of God for a word for God’s people. From the first thought of what the text might be until the moment after the final

word of the sermon, the preacher will recognize total dependence on God. I love John Piper's acronym regarding this fact:⁸³

Admit- without Him I cannot do it. John 15:5

Pray- for help. Beg for power, insight, love, freedom and memory. Psalm 50:15

Trust- Psalm 40:17

Act- in confidence that God will deliver His message

Thank- God that the message was sustained.

2. Objective 2: The preacher needs to become *very* familiar with the manuscript by rehearsing and memorizing the content.

Preachers are very intimidated by the concept of writing a manuscript of their sermons. There is even more resistance when it comes to memorizing it. When writing the sermon a lot of effort is put into formulating ideas, choosing the right words and expressions, and also it gives the preacher familiarity with the text. Memorization makes the preacher internalize the message!

Familiarity gives the preacher knowledge, confidence and excitement. When you talk about what makes you excited you do not need notes. (i.e. speaking about your grandchildren, or mission work or your fiancé). When you internalize God's message, his Spirit fills you and the scriptural truth is comes through your personality.

3. Objective 3: The preacher needs to get a good night's sleep.

Rest is a very important part of preparation for delivery. Proper rest gives the preacher power to concentrate, energy to sustain his voice and alertness of

⁸³ Piper, *Supremacy of God in Preaching*, 48-49.

mind. I say this because I know firsthand how it was when I had to step into the pulpit and I felt tired.

On some occasions preachers step into the pulpit and the first thing out of their mouths is to tell the audience how tired they are. That is inexcusable. That tells people “I would rather be sleeping than standing before you to preach.” That will turn off an audience with the speed of an electric switch. I write this because I have witnessed it in person.

4. Objective 4: Eat a balanced and healthy breakfast.

Preaching with a growling stomach is also to be avoided. The body of the preacher must receive proper nutrition to be healthy and energized. A good balanced breakfast will give him energy and alertness necessary for a good delivery.

5. Objective 5: Arrive in time (reserve time to be with the ministry team and also a time to focus alone).

Some preachers arrive at church just in time to preach. Others come one or two hours before the service starts but they get busy with their routine: revisit the sermon, make adjustments, turn on the A/C and the sound system in the sanctuary, do the sound check, pray with the choir, pray with the praise band, visit with the ushers and occasionally pray with people in crisis. All these are squeezed in a short amount of time and the preacher is forced to start the service without a moment alone for prayer and focus.

There needs to be a balance. The preacher needs that personal time and space before the beginning of the service, or frustration will surface causing unnecessary distractions.

6. Objective 6: Warm-up your vocal cords.

This is a luxury but when possible, it will benefit the preacher. My preferred place is in my office where I can spend time reading the text aloud.

Goals 2 and 3 will deal the verbal and nonverbal elements of delivery. In order to better understand that let's look at Donald Smith's list. Signals also called Systems we use in communication:⁸⁴

- a. Verbal-speech
- b. Written-symbols representing speech
- c. Numeric-numbers and number systems
- d. Pictorial-two-dimensional representations
- e. Artificial- three-dimensional representations and objects, the
 "things" used in living
- f. Audio- use of nonverbal sounds, and silence
- g. Kinetic- body motions, facial expressions, posture
- h. Optical- light and color
- i. Tactile- touch, the sense of "feel"
- j. Spatial- utilization of space
- k. Temporal- utilization of time
- l. Olfactory- taste and smell

⁸⁴ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 146.

These systems are important because the preacher engages them in the context of the preaching event. “Usage of the signal systems is a function of culture, thus they are used differently in different cultures.”⁸⁵

Goal 2: Learn the nonverbal elements of delivery.

1. Objective 1: Groom and dress.

Dress appropriately to match what Haddon Robinson calls the community standards. When he came to preach at my church, he called the church office and asked what the ministers wear when they preach. While in seminary, I was invited to preach in a church in Southern California. I dressed up in a dark suit, white shirt and a colorful tie. The second I crossed the doorway I just about froze with embarrassment. Being a beach community, everybody including the pastor was dressed in Hawaiian shirts, shorts and sandals. For the whole service I felt like an outsider. I do not even want to think how the sermon connected with the audience, but I learned the lesson.

2. Objective 2: Relax and show confidence.

There is such thing as stage fright and it comes in two forms. First is nervousness, especially when not prepared. The second one is positive, when you get excited about the message God gave you and when with confidence you step forward and as William J. Carl III says, “You get the butterflies to fly in formation.”⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Smith, *Creating Understanding*, 144.

⁸⁶ William J. Carl III, Los Ranchos Presbytery Pastor’s Retreat, Serra Retreat Center, Malibu, California, February 16-18, 2011.

The preacher shows confidence in several ways. First, his whole personality engages in the act of delivery. During the delivery there is a sense of authority given to him almost like a controlling power over the audience. As he rises to preach there is an element of freedom and he engages the congregation. Communication involves both the preacher and the audience. “There is interplay, action and response, and this often makes a very vital difference.”⁸⁷

3. Objective 3: Using or not using the pulpit.

This issue could be controversial. There are pro’s and con’s to this issue. The traditional way is behind the pulpit. In some cases I heard of preachers who want a big pulpit, elevated above the audience. In these cases the use and dependence of a manuscript will be easier. In other cases, the preacher prefers to not have anything between him and the people he addresses. This gives him the chance to engage the people, have good eye contact and move around during the delivery. A disadvantage to this practice is the limitation in use notes and manuscripts, but I would say the benefits are greater than the limitations.

4. Objective 4: Limit and coordinate movement and gestures (spontaneous, definite, varied, well timed).

Haddon Robinson writes, “God designed the human body to move. If your congregation wants to look at a statue, they can go to a museum. Even there, however, the most impressive statues are those that appear alive.”⁸⁸ Body movement expresses the feelings of the mind and heart. Gestures help the speaker

⁸⁷ Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 84.

⁸⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 208.

express and describe feelings and images. Gestures need to be coordinated and not dominant. A preacher can move too much and that can create distractions.

5. Objective 5: Eye contact–speak to the whole congregation

“Eye contact probably ranks as the most effective means of nonverbal communication at your disposal.”⁸⁹ Looking into the eyes of your listeners gives the preacher clues. It establishes a dialogue of trust. Eye contact assures the preacher of being interesting, connected and of the audience’s willingness to continue to listen. Personally, I discovered that when I look into the audience, sometimes I lock into someone’s eyes for a second just enough to have the Spirit of God tell me, “allow me to speak to this person now, stay on the subject and I will tell you what to say.” It is a marvelous experience.

6. Objective 6: Smile and act natural.

Smile when it is appropriate. A warm smile warms the hearts of the listeners and invites them to relax and listen. It tells them that you are confident, you know what you are talking about and if you can smile, they will have permission to smile also. In regards to acting natural, do that. Do not copy another preacher’s movements, actions, forms of expression or habits. The audience will be turned off to see you acting differently than the person they know and talk with when you are not in the pulpit.

Goal 3: Learn elements of delivery and verbal communication.

1. Objective 1: Spontaneity

⁸⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 211.

Preaching is a dialogue between the speaker and the listener. Both sides engage in communication by giving and receiving information. Just like in a dialogue you do not know the words and reaction of the person at the other side of the communication event. A preacher should be prepared to deal with unexpected reactions, be spontaneous in response and be able to carry the flow of the sermon. Preaching targets the heart of the listener and because of that there is a good chance this skill will come handy.

2. Objective 2: Humor

The view on use of humor varies from culture to culture, tradition to tradition and church to church. The preacher should be aware of this and conform to each particular setting. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes, “I would not dare say that there is no place for humor in preaching; but I do suggest that it should not be a very big place because of the nature of the work, and because of the Truth with which we are dealing.”⁹⁰ Reading this statement gives the impression of caution about the use of humor. On the opposite, George E. Sweazey gives us “ten reasons where humor helps preaching achieve its purposes.”⁹¹ They are: reveals truth, severs fanaticism, helps keep people aware of the incongruity of their pretensions, the ability to see the absurd as comic is the cure for melancholy, the church service ought to be therapeutic, it gives people a way of dealing with afflictions, relaxes the strain of listening and helps people accept what might be hard to take. Personally I think humor is good but the preacher needs to be very,

⁹⁰ Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 241.

⁹¹ Sweazey, *Preaching the Good News*, 203.

very careful of how to use it. There is a great possibility that the humor will distract the audience when it is misplaced and misguided.

3. Objective 3: Authenticity

The preacher should not copy other preachers or styles outside of what makes them comfortable and genuine. Be yourself! (A good way to illustrate this would be using an object lesson. On a three by five note card have the students write the name of their favorite preacher and then ask them to tell the instructor and the class why they picked that person. Then, while reading each card, tear up the card one by one telling the students why they have to be genuine and authentic about their own call.)

4. Objective 4: Passion and enthusiasm

Cicero said, “The one who speaks well has power,” and Paul said “God’s power is made perfect in our weakness.” Speaking well requires passion and enthusiasm. When doing that the audience will see and hear a speaker who is convinced and excited about the topic. Lloyd-Jones writes, “There is something radically wrong with dull and boring preachers. How can a man be dull when he is handling such themes? I would say that a ‘dull preacher’ is a contradiction of terms; if he is dull he is not a preacher. He may stand in the pulpit but he is certainly not a preacher. With the grand theme and message of the Bible dullness is impossible.”⁹²

5. Objective 5: Simplicity: clear, short sentences, well paced (allow people to think), pause, tone of voice.

⁹² Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 87.

Effective delivery requires simplicity. Language is very important. In *Between Two Worlds*, John Stott writes: “What really matters is:

- a. Always try to use the language so as to make quite clear what you mean, and make sure your sentence couldn’t mean something else.
- b. Always prefer the plain direct word to the long vague one. Don’t ‘implement’ promises, but ‘keep’ them.
- c. Never use abstract nouns when concrete ones will do. If you mean ‘more people die,’ don’t say ‘mortality rose.’
- d. Don’t use adjectives which merely tell us how you want us to feel about the thing you are describing. I mean, instead of telling us a thing was ‘terrible,’ describe it to us so that we’ll be terrified.
- e. Don’t use words too big for the subject. Don’t say ‘infinitely’ when you mean ‘very’; otherwise you’ll have no word left when you want to talk about something really infinite.”⁹³

Tone of voice shall be the speaking voice not the preaching voice.

Preaching is dialogue with the people. It is speaking to them not at them. A raised voice will make the audience think the speaker is mad and they will not pay attention to the message. Pausing is important to allow the audience to think and process what they hear.

Goal 4: Sermon evaluation

1. Objective 1: Self-evaluation

⁹³ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 235.

Take any opportunity to listen to your sermon. A video tape of the sermon will be great for observing the total communication event as studied in this lesson.

2. Objective 2: Peer evaluation

Use the help of other preachers through constructive and informed criticism. For this process, it is good to hang your pride aside and be open to hear what might help you.

3. Objective 3: Congregational evaluation

Chose members of the congregation, teach them what to watch for in your preaching and invite them to give you feedback. This is a very valuable tool for improvement in your local setting.

A survey evaluation can be found in Appendix 3.

CHAPTER 5

INSIGHTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This has been an incredible journey. The desire to help young ministers and lay preachers in Romania was conceived in my heart long before attending my DMin. instruction classes at Gordon-Conwell Seminary. Studying and receiving the tools of instruction that would facilitate the realization of such a desire was something I could not decline. I was grateful when the Dr. Robinson approved this project.

In the beginning, I had no idea that my desire would result in extensive massive research, lots of reading, interviews, and even traveling to obtain the sources required to assemble and complete this project.

Personally, this was a very rewarding effort for me. I poured myself into reading anything that had to do with preaching. I read old books and new ones. I saw trends that stood the test of time. I saw principles that did not change. What worked fifty years ago, still works today.

The true and effective preaching of the Word of God remains grounded in the need for solid exegetical work. The preacher needs to distill the one idea of the text that leads to the development and delivery of the life changing Word of God. The message needs to be clear not blurred, like the command coming from an army officer, like the diagnosis and the treatment recommended by a doctor, and like the directions given by a map to get one to the right destination.

The only thing that has changed in the practice of preaching is the way the preacher instills the application of the timeless truth of God in the contemporary settings

of today. This kind of skill, if correctly applied, will be effective at any time, in any culture and in any setting.

Willingly or not my family took on a large part of this project. I traveled to Romania and spent a lot of time away, as I worked my way through each page of this thesis. The last few vacations were books, books and more books. I am grateful for my family's understanding and support.

My ministry at the church in which I am currently serving has benefited from this project. First were the prayers of the people and their cooperation and support. Gayle Harvill and Robin Ruble are my editors. They have given countless time and effort to work on editing my thesis. Even before I started to write this thesis, many members of my congregation were involved in the two ministry projects in which there was active analyzing of sermons, feedback, and evaluation. There were sermons that we worked on together and received valuable information that enabled me to hear the heartbeat of my congregation.

There was not a lack of surprises as I gathered information. In March of 2011, I went to Romania and had the privilege of interviewing ministers and lay preachers who were involved in church planting and mission work in Romania and abroad. I spent one week with them and that time gave me insights into their ministries and their needs. As we discussed their personal lives, their preaching ministries, their struggles and their sense of call, I found that they were very open and direct in sharing their hearts. When I told them what the goal for my thesis was and gave them some insights as to what the material would look like, they asked me, "How soon can you have it available?" I have kept in touch with them and it is my feeling that they will be the first who will offer me

the chance to teach this course. If all goes well, I plan to teach this new course later this year.

In the process of gathering information, I heard from pastors from whom I never met before. To my surprise they also were very open and willing to share their ministries and visions for preaching. Some I had the privilege to call and speak with directly. Others sent me their thoughts via email. Some did not respond. I took all the information that was given and in any form and wrote it down.

I learned from ministers who had been involved in ministry for a long time. I learned about their dedication to ministry, their sacrifices and their willingness to learn. The most common trend was their eagerness to learn how to address the younger generation. They are challenged with the clash of cultures and finding out that some things just do not work in the same way.

Some of the lay ministers and ministers of the Word, speak English at some level. For those who are able to read in English, I wanted to provide help. Since I did not find many of resources in Romanian, so I chose to write chapter three more extensively giving the readers some background information on books I thought they would find useful. I feel that the synopsis of the books will help them in some measure.

I need to make a reference to first person preaching. Because of the length of this thesis and the amount of information it contains, I decided not to include it in the material to be covered. I felt that it would become part of the preaching ministry of the Romanian ministers and for that reason, I plan to develop curriculum for that specific preaching style. Coming from a culture that places a very high value on oral tradition, I know that in the very near future, the Romanian ministers will embrace first person teaching. On a few

occasions in the last two years of ministry, I did some first person preaching. I received good feedback and felt the congregation responded well.

My expectations for this thesis are very high because I know the value of the teaching it contains and I know the need in Romania. I am not sure what the expectations of other people will be, but that will be seen in the future.

My primary plan for the future is to write this curriculum in such way that it will generate a large interest in the minds and hearts of the Romanian preachers.

This thesis will be translated into Romanian. Prior to that translation I will have received feedback from Romanian ministers who are familiar with both the Romanian and the Western cultures. My reasoning is I want to be sure that I am culturally sensitive to the Romanian culture. Dr. Lazar Gog is one of the preachers who will be assisting me. He is very well known in the Romanian speaking community. He is the Senior Pastor of Emanuel Pentecostal Church in Anaheim, California. For a number of years he has been traveling to Romania and has taught at the Pentecostal Seminary in Bucharest. In a very recent conversation with him he told me he wrote a curriculum for preaching for the Romanian students at the seminary. He travels often and maintains connection with Romanian churches established in Spain, Italy, England and other countries. He travels in the United States and is well connected with the Romanian churches in this country. I am sure that Pastor Lazar will afford me great insights.

Another Pastor I will seek out to evaluate my thesis is Dr. Eugen Jugaru. He is the pastor of a Pentecostal Church in Codlea, Romania. Dr. Eugen also teaches at the Pentecostal Seminary in Bucharest. As a professor, he is going to provide me with insights into theological aspects of the current status of preaching in Romania.

I would like to think that I will be teaching this material for the first time this year sometime in late fall. The group I will invite to be part of this experience is the same group that told me their time and interest and informed me of their need last year. We will convene in our first meeting in a conference room at a hotel in Zalau. The room is large enough; space is comfortable, it has great lighting, tables, chairs and a whiteboard. I intend to prepare power point presentation for each lesson. Because I have a great relationship with owner of the hotel, coffee and snacks will be made available to insure a more relaxed atmosphere.

Anticipated attendees will be Romanian lay preachers as well as ordained ministers.

After this first teaching, I will gather feedback from the pastors and lay ministers in attendance. I will use the information to make changes and re-develop the curriculum of this thesis. I will seek continuous improvement of the material having as my goal to teach effective preaching with maximum impact in the Romanian cultural environment.

I am confident that in some way, God will use the passion and gifts He gave me, to minister and teach the Romanian church leaders skills that will enhance both their ministry and mine.

APPENDIX 1

RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE: WORKSHOP ON CALL TO MINISTRY

1. Are you ordained and for how long? Age?

There were four lay ministers: ages are 61, 61, 31 and 71.

Ten ordained ministers: age 58 serving as pastor for 14 years; age 55 serving for 14; age 42 serving for 16; age 69 serving for 32; age 47 serving for 17; age 60 serving for 15; age 28 serving for 5 years; age 55 serving for 11 years, and age 58 serving for 11 years.

2. What is the denomination of the church you serve? Are serving more than one church?

All were Baptist.

3. How many churches are you serving?

Seven are serving one church

One is serving two churches

Four are serving three churches

One is serving four churches

One is serving five churches

4. Are you married? How long?

Two not married

Two are married for less than five years

Ten are married over twenty five years

5. Do you have children? How many?

One has no children

Two have one child

Five have two children

Five have three children

One has four children

6. On a personal level, what is your greatest challenge?

Serving God – the answer of two ministers

Preaching- the answer of two ministers

Become a man of prayer- the answer of two ministers

To know God –the answer of two ministers

Leaving the humorous Bible” and preach God’s Word- one minister

To hear God’s voice clearly- one minister

Mission- one minister

Efficiency in preaching- one minister

Creating strategies-one minister

Balanced life- one minister

7. On a personal level, what is your greatest joy?

Salvation- the answer of five ministers

Seeing results in ministry- the answer of five ministers

Preaching- the answer of two ministers

Belonging to God- one minister

Reading a good book- one minister

8. On a personal level, what is your greatest obstacle?

Human condition- the answer of two ministers

Satan –the answer of two ministers

Time management- the answer of two ministers

Not having the fullness of the Holy Spirit- one minister

Fear- one minister

Lies-one minister

Health- one minister

People who cannot be trusted- one minister

People not receiving the Gospel- one minister

Communication- one minister

Absence of peace- one minister

9. On a personal level, what is your greatest concern?

Health- the answer of three ministers

Not to lose my salvation and the prize of my running –the answer of two ministers

Not to be effective in building lives- one minister

Not to be effective in winning lives- one minister

To not obey God-one minister

Finances- one minister

Wife not saved- one minister

Burn-out too much work- one minister

Not to be able to go to church- one minister

To miss being a good husband and father – one minister

Weakness- one minister

10. Relating to your family, what is your greatest challenge?

Salvation- the answer of three ministers

Time with family –the answer of two ministers

Knowing my wife- one minister

Joy of salvation- one minister

Happiness- one minister

To have eternal life – one minister

Showing affection- one minister

Grandchildren and children- one minister

Salvation for family members- one minister

Reconciliation- one minister

Prayer- one minister

11. Relating to your family, what is your greatest joy?

Saved family- the answer of six ministers

Children and grandchildren- the answer of two ministers

Health- one minister

Live together- one minister

Serve the Lord with my wife- one minister

Prosperity- spiritual and material- one minister

Freedom to pray- one minister

Obedience to the Lord- one minister

Relating your family, what is your greatest obstacle?

Sickness- the answer of three ministers

Time with family-the answer of two ministers

Unsaved family members- the answer of two ministers

Age- one minister

Family issues- one minister

Separated from children- one minister

Time- one minister

Spiritual battles- one minister

Resources- one minister

None- one did not answer

12. Relating your family, what is your greatest concern?

Finances – the answer of three ministers

Children's education-the answer of three ministers

I will die before I will see my children saved –the answer of two ministers

Jobs- one minister

“Tomorrow” uncertainty of the future- one minister

Family members not interested in the Lord- one minister

Not being with the children- one minister

Children's sickness- one minister

My little sister- one minister

13. In your career, what is your greatest challenge?

Planting churches- the answer of two ministers

Church growth- the answer of two ministers

Identify with people in the village who listen to my preaching- one minister

Unity of the church- one minister

Efficiency in my work- one minister

Obedience/ listening to God- one minister

Sin of the people- one minister

The maturity of the church- one minister

Preaching so that all can understand- one minister

Reconciliation among church members- one minister

To help people love the Lord- one minister

To bring people to know Christ- one minister

In your career, what is your greatest joy?

People who come to Christ- the answer of seven ministers

Winning souls- the answer of four ministers

New church planted- one minister

Mission- one minister

Full church- one minister

14. In your career, what is your greatest obstacle?

Unbelief and disinterest of people –the answer of two ministers

Time management- the answer of two ministers

Finances- the answer of two ministers

Formality and apathy –the answer of two ministers

Not to be able to do what needs to be done- one minister

Patience- one minister

Christians not interested in serving- one minister

People rebelling against God- one minister

Absence of vision- one minister

Traditionalism- one minister

15. In your career, what is your greatest concern?

Church not interested in evangelism- the answer of two ministers

Not to walk before the Lord- one minister

Not to be able to motivate people for the Kingdom- one minister

Resources- one minister

People being real- genuine- one minister

Not to do enough for the Lord- one minister

Cold Christians- one minister

The change of the direction of the church dictated by the socio-political agenda-
one minister

Cults- one minister

Not being relevant for the audience- one minister

I will lose my zeal for the Lord- one minister

Waiting for the Lord's return- one minister

No answer- one minister

16. In your ministry, what is your greatest challenge?

Unity in the church- the answer of four ministers

Unity of leadership- the answer of three ministers

Harmony/ unity in vision- the answer of two ministers

Stubborn people- one minister

Communicating the Word of God- one minister

Impact in the church- one minister

Desire to will souls- one minister

Love among Christians- one minister

17. In your ministry, what is your greatest joy?

New converts- the answer of four ministers

Unity and progress- the answer of two ministers

People are encouraged spiritually- one minister

Good fellowship- one minister

Unity in ministry, worship and prayer- one minister

Joy in the presence of the Lord- one minister

People are interested in spiritual matters- one minister

Love- one minister

Enthusiasm in prayer- one minister

Peace- one minister

18. In your ministry, what is your greatest obstacle?

Lack of unity- the answer of four ministers

Formality- one minister

Traditionalism- one minister

Resources- one minister

To come to church on summer time- one minister

Disobedience- one minister

Making people generous- one minister

Lack of interest- one minister

Missing church- one minister

Pride and gossip- one minister

Integration of new converts- one minister

19. In your ministry, what is your greatest concern?

Church growth- the answer of two ministers

Missing church- one minister

People not interested and uninvolved- one minister

Gossip will ruin the church- one minister

Apathy- one minister

People growing cold- one minister

Church attendance- one minister

Members getting older- one minister

Return to Christ- one minister

Witness- one minister

Youth moving into the city and not returning- one minister

Stagnation and spiritual regress- one minister

People who received the Lord do not get baptized- one minister

20. Regarding the church at large, what is your greatest challenge?

Relationship and collaboration among churches- the answer of two ministers

Unity among the church leaders- the answer of two ministers

Passion for the Lord- one minister

Reverence/ understanding the young generation- one minister

Interacting with cults (reaching out in conversation) - one minister

Unity is teaching- one minister

Love- one minister

All people to be saved by the Lord- one minister

To grow our influence in the world- one minister

Weak workers in the field- one minister

Conservative vs. freedom of the Spirit- one minister

Communication- one minister

21 Regarding the church at large, what is your greatest joy?

Changed lives- the answer of two ministers

Receiving Christ- the answer of two ministers.

Full churches- the answer of two ministers

Unity of action- one minister

Freedom of evangelism- one minister

Change of Romania- one minister

Every church has their witness- one minister

Young evangelists- one minister

To be full of zeal for the Lord – on fire for the Lord- one minister

Prayer- one minister

Freedom of religion- one minister

22. Regarding the church at large, what is your greatest obstacle?

Materialism –the answer of two ministers

Apathy- the answer of two ministers

False doctrine- one minister

People not serious- one minister

Lack of unity- everyone for themselves- one minister

Finances- one minister

Hate of other denominations- one minister

Not being vigil- one minister

Conformity to the world- one minister

Alcohol- one minister

Isolation- one minister

Pride, selfishness and greed- one minister

23. Regarding the church at large, what is your greatest concern?

Competition between churches- the answer of three ministers

Apathy- the answer of two ministers

Future of the church- one minister

Heresy- one minister

Secularism entering the churches- one minister

Darkness and idolatry- one minister

No results- one minister

Being like the world- one minister

Church attendance- one minister

Breaking relationships- one minister

People leave the churches- one minister

24. How often do you preach?

Once a week- the answer of three ministers

Twice a week- the answer of four ministers

Three times a week- the answer of five ministers

Four times a week- one minister

Five times a week- one minister

25. Do you have time to prepare your sermons? How long do you spend preparing?

Between 45 minutes and one hour- the answer of two ministers

Under five hours- the answer of five ministers

Under ten hours- the answer of two ministers

Over ten under eighteen- the answer of six ministers

26. How do you prepare you sermons?

Preach on books, read text many time, develop outline, use commentaries,
dictionaries- one minister

Work on five points sermons- one minister

Read the text 3-4 times (consider the size of the church) - one minister

Read text, pray, listen to other sermons or read sermons on the theme- one
minister

Pray, read the text and make outline- one minister

Pray, read, make outline, get the principal idea, , develop points- one minister

Read, meditate and write outline with points- one minister

Chose a text, study context, study theme, characters of the text, Biblical, cultural
historic and social context- one minister

Prayer, read passage, define central idea, develop- one minister

Pray, read and pray- one minister

Pray, take notes, write a manuscript, pray- one minister

Pray, get principal idea, develop- one minister

Read, get principal ideas, write an essay, do the outline- one minister

Read/ choose/ observe and then go deeper. Arrange points in theological order-
rearrange- one minister

27. What resources do you use in sermon preparation?

Bible- all of them

Additional religious books- the answer of seven ministers

Special Bible courses- the answer of three ministers

Dictionaries- the answer of three ministers

Commentaries- the answer of four ministers

Evangelism books- the answers of two ministers

Internet- one minister

Sermons on line or hard copy- the answer of three ministers

Holy Spirit- one minister

28. What additional help would you like?

Books

Commentaries

Old biblical literature

Sermons

Seminars/courses- teachers to teach courses

Logos Libronix

Dictionaries

New publications

29. What is your greatest fear about preaching? (some had more than one)

Not to be understood by the audience- the answer of six ministers

Fidelity to the Scripture- the answer of two ministers

Fear that I will say something that will cause someone to leave the church- one minister

Lack of clarity- one minister

Mediocrity/ lack of inspiration- one minister

My sermon material was not prepared enough- one minister

I want to tell people all I know and that gets them tired- one minister

Not be obedient to the Holy Spirit- one minister

Ask myself "did I do enough?" - one minister

Pride- one minister

APPENDIX 2

HOW TEACHING AND PREACHING DIFFER AND OVERLAP:

WILLIAM J. CARL III

Didache	Kerygma
In <u>teaching</u> you speculate.	In <u>preaching</u> you proclaim.
In <u>teaching</u> you present possibilities.	In <u>preaching</u> you take a position.
You <u>teach</u> for information.	You <u>preach</u> for decision.
In <u>teaching</u> you ask questions.	In <u>preaching</u> you answer them.
<u>Teaching</u> is exploratory and explanatory.	<u>Preaching</u> is expository.
In <u>teaching</u> you present an idea.	In <u>preaching</u> you present a person.
In <u>teaching</u> you search for something.	In <u>preaching</u> you find it.
In <u>teaching</u> you address learners.	In <u>preaching</u> you engage believers/inquirers.
In <u>teaching</u> you say, "It seems to me."	In <u>preaching</u> you say, "Thus saith the Lord!"
In <u>teaching</u> you introduce something new.	In <u>preaching</u> you see something old as new.
In <u>teaching</u> you're by yourself.	In <u>preaching</u> you have extra help – Holy Spirit
In <u>teaching</u> you analyze many texts & contexts.	In <u>preaching</u> you open Text/Context-
Then/Now	
<u>Teaching</u> is proof.	<u>Preaching</u> is about faith.
In <u>teaching</u> you offer evidence.	In <u>preaching</u> you bear witness.
In <u>teaching</u> there's bad news and good news.	In <u>preaching</u> even bad news can turn to good.
<u>Teaching</u> is about truths.	<u>Preaching</u> is about TRUTH.

At best these are approximations and tendencies with exceptions here and there. In both, you ‘teach the mind, touch the heart and move the will.’ In both, you go on a journey. In both, you’re not the point. They often overlap in classroom and pulpit. Sometimes preachers teach and professors **preach**.

APPENDIX 3
SERMON EVALUATION

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information regarding my preaching and communication skills. Your feelings about my messages are very important to me, and I would very much appreciate your immediate feedback about today's sermon. I will use your responses and the composite of everyone's responses to strengthen the clarity of my messages and increase their meaningfulness to the congregation. Please answer all the questions based only on today's sermon. Please don't put your name on the evaluation. The Doctor of Ministry program I am enrolled in at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary requires this exercise. Thanks!

Put the appropriate number next to the question.

Questions on the Introduction

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
Agree						Disagree

1. ____ The introduction captured my attention.
2. ____ The introduction prepared me for the content of the sermon.
3. ____ The introduction made me want to listen to the entire message.

Questions on the Content of the Sermon

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
Agree						Disagree

4. ___ The message was biblically based.
5. ___ The sermon held my attention.
6. ___ I felt God spoke to me personally through this sermon.
7. ___ The sermon showed originality and creativity.
8. ___ I found the sermon to be relevant to my life.
9. ___ I learned something new from this sermon.
10. ___ The message was based more on the preacher's opinions rather than on the Scripture passage.
11. ___ The message corresponded to real life.
12. ___ The sermon was well organized (i.e., it was easy to follow; it flowed smoothly).
13. ___ I was more impressed with God after hearing the sermon.
14. ___ I feel the passage was clearly explained.
15. ___ I was positively challenged by the content of this message.
16. ___ The illustrations helped me to understand the points being made.
17. ___ The illustrations were interesting and captured my attention.
18. ___ The message touched some need in me either directly or indirectly.

Questions on the Conclusion

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
Agree						Disagree

19. ___ The main point of the sermon was crystallized in the conclusion.
20. ___ I had a clear sense of what I personally needed to do as a result of hearing the sermon.
21. ___ I felt motivated to follow God's ways at the end of the sermon.

Questions of the Style and Presentation

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
Agree						Disagree

22. ___ The pastor made good eye contact during the sermon.
23. ___ The pastor's gestures fit what he was saying.
24. ___ His eye contact made me feel that he was talking to me.
25. ___ The sermon touched me emotionally.
26. ___ The humor that was used was appropriate to the setting.
27. ___ The pastor believes what he preaches.
28. ___ The pastor's appearance was appropriate for the setting.
29. ___ I would find it easy to bring a Christian friend to hear this sermon.

30. ___ I would find it easy to bring a non-Christian friend to hear this sermon.

31. ___ The pastor's vocabulary was appropriate for the setting – neither too scholarly nor elementary.

Additional Questions

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
Agree						Disagree

32. ___ Based on how the pastor came across through the sermon, I would feel comfortable sitting down and talking with him.

33. ___ I believe God will use this sermon in my life.

34. ___ I found my mind wandering during the message.

35. ___ I am looking forward to hearing next week's sermon.

36. ___ I sensed the Holy Spirit working on me during the message.

37. Overall, I felt the message was (*circle one of the worlds below*):

Poor Fair Good Very Good Excellent

Circle the # on the scale that best reflects your opinion about the sermon.

38. Dull 1 2 3 4 5 Interesting

39. Impractical 1 2 3 4 5 Practical

40. Delivery	1	2	3	4	5	Delivery
“too slow”						“too fast”
41. Shallow	1	2	3	4	5	Substantial
42. Ego Driven	1	2	3	4	5	Spirit-Led
43. Conversational	1	2	3	4	5	
Preachy						
44. Too Long	1	2	3	4	5	Too Short

Questions about You

45. Male or Female (*circle one*)?

46. What is your age?

- a. Under 18 years
- b. 18-25 years
- c. 26-34 years
- d. 35-50 years
- e. 51-65 years
- f. 66 years or older

47. What is your church background?

- a. Protestant
- b. Catholic
- c. No religious background
- d. Other: _____

48. How many years have you been a Christian?

- a. I do not consider myself a Christian.
- b. Less than two years
- c. Between 2-5 years
- d. Between 6-10 years
- e. Between 11-20 years
- f. More than 20 years

49. How long have you been attending this church? _____

Short Response Questions

50. What was the aspect of this message you found most helpful?

51. Did the pastor use any mannerisms, gestures, or words that you found distracting or unpleasant? If so, what were they?

52. What was the weakest aspect of this message?

53. How could the pastor have done a better job with the message (content, delivery, style, introduction, conclusion, application, etc.)?

54. Please state the main point of the sermon in a brief sentence or two.

55. Do you feel this sermon made a difference in your life? If so, in what way?

Additional Comments:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Jay E. *Audience Adaptations in the Sermons and Speeches of Paul*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976.
- . *Preaching with Purpose: The Urgent Task of Homiletics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.
- Allen, Ronald J. *The Teaching Sermon*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.
- Basden, Paul, and David S. Dockery, eds. *The People of God*. Nashville: Broadman, 1991.
- Beaudean, John, Jr. *Paul's Theology of Preaching*. Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press, 1988.
- Blackwood, Andrew W. *The Preparation of Sermons*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1948.
- Boden, Evan H. *Guide for Lay Preachers*. Valley Forge, PA.: Judson, 1979.
- Bounds, E.M. *Powerful and Prayerful Pulpits: Forty Days of Readings*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993.
- Brookfield, Stephen D. *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1986.
- Brown, H.C., Jr. *A Christian Layman's Guide to Public Speaking*. Nashville: Broadman, 1966.
- Brueggeman, Walter. *The Prophet's Imagination*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.
- Buzzell, Sid. *Learning and Instructional Design*. Unpublished class notes at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2010.
- Carl, William J., III *Best Advice: Wisdom on Ministry from 30 Leading Pastors and Preachers*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009.
- Carson, D. A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984.
- Chapell, Bryan. *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1994.
- . *The Hardest Sermons You'll Ever Have to Preach*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.

- Colson, Charles. *Who Speaks for God? Confronting the World with Real Christianity*. Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1985.
- Cox, James W. *A Guide to Biblical Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976.
- . *Preaching: A Comprehensive Approach to the Design and Delivery of Sermons*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985.
- Craddock, Fred B. *Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1985.
- Crawley, Winston. *Global Mission: A Story to Tell*. Nashville: Broadman, 1985.
- Davis, H. Grady. *Design for Preaching*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958.
- Dick, Walter and Lou Carey. *The Systematic Design of Instruction*. 3rd ed. Scranton, PA: Harper Collins, 1990.
- Dinu, Mihai. "The Authority of the Word." *Pleroma* 5, no. 1 (2003): 57-72.
- Dodd, C. H. *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962.
- Duduit, Michael, ed. *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*. Nashville: Broadman, 1992.
- Edwards, O. C., Jr. *A History of Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2004.
- Eslinger, L. Richard. *Pitfalls in Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Eswine, Zack. *Preaching to a Post-Everything World: Crafting Biblical Sermons That Connect with Our Culture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2008.
- Evans, William. *How to Prepare Sermons*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1964.
- Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stewart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.
- Freeman, Harold. *Variety in Biblical Preaching*. Waco, TX: Word, 1987.
- Garner, Stephen Chapin. *Getting into Character: The Art of First-Person Narrative Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008.
- George, Timothy. *The Priesthood of all Believers: The People of God*. Edited by Paul Basden and David Dockery. Nashville: Broadman, 1991.

- Greidanus, Sidney. *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Griggs, Donald L. *Teaching Teachers to Teach: A Basic Manual for Christian Teachers*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1974.
- Hall, John. *God's Word Through Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.
- Heitzig, Skip. *How to Study the Bible and Enjoy It*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1996.
- Henderson, David W. *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to Our Changing World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998.
- Hendricks, Howard G. *Teaching to Change Lives*. Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1987.
- Hybels, Bill, Stewart Briscoe, and Haddon Robinson. *Mastering Contemporary Preaching*. Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1989.
- Johnson, Laney L. *The Church: God's People on Mission*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1995.
- Jones, Ilion T. *Principles and Practice of Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1956.
- Jowett, J. H. *The Preacher: His Life and Work*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968.
- Killinger, John. *Fundamentals of Preaching*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
- Koller, Charles W. *How to Preach Without Notes*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962.
- Litfin, Duane. *Public Speaking: A Handbook for Christians*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981.
- Lingenfelter, Sherwood G., and Marvin K. Mayers. *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986.
- Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. *Preaching and Preachers*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971.
- Long, Thomas G. *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989.
- . *The Witness of Preaching*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1989.
- Mager, Robert F. *Preparing Instructional Objectives*. Belmont, CA: Lake, 1984.

- Manastireanu, Danut. "The Proclamation of God's Word: Foundation of the Reconciliation Mission of the Church in the Post-Communist Context." *Pleroma* 10, no. 1 (June 2008): 59-86.
- McArthur, John, Jr. *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*. Dallas: Word, 1992.
- McDowell, Josh, and Thomas Williams. *The Relational God: A Biblical Design to Reclaim and Transform the Next Generation*. Holiday, FL: Green Key Books, 2006.
- McLean, Gary N. "Developing Lay Ministers." *Christianity Today* 25 (May-June 1994): 34-36.
- Mocan, Ghita. "Preaching and the Preachers in the Thought of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones," *Pleroma* 3, no.2 (December 2001): 67-92.
- Mohler, R. Albert, Jr. *A Theology of Preaching: Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*. Edited by Michael Duduit. Nashville: Broadman, 1992.
- Monkres, Peter R. "Lay Sermons: The Power and the Glory." *Christian Ministry* 10, no.2 (March 1979): 31-33.
- Nechita, Vasile. "Centrality of Christ, Mirror in the Holy Scripture and Its Actuality for the Mission of the Church Today." *Pleroma* 8, no. 2 (June 2006): 53-70.
- Neill, Stephen. *A History of Christian Missions*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.
- Niculcea, Adrian. "The Necessity of a Foundational Program to Assure Scripture a Role in the Modern World." *Pleroma* 8, no. 2 (June 2006): 29-52.
- Olford, Stephen F. *Anointed Expository Preaching*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998.
- Petric, Paulian. "Fundamental Principles of Bible Interpretation in Protestant Theology." *Pleroma* 5, no. 1 (June 2003): 161-76.
- Piper, John. *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990.
- Pitt-Watson, Ian. *A Primer for Preachers*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986.
- Ramesh, Richard. *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995.
- Richard, Beaton. "Principles of Scripture Interpretation in Evangelical Theology." *Pleroma* 3, no.1 (June 2001): 5-16.

- Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching: How Twelve Preachers Apply the Principles of Biblical Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989.
- . *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1980.
- . *Making a Difference in Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books House, 1993.
- . “What Is Expository Preaching?” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 130 (July-September 1973): 223-24.
- . “What Authority Do We Have Anymore?” *Leadership* 13, no. 2 (spring 1992): 24-29.
- , and Torrey W. Robinson, *It’s All in How You Tell It: Preaching First-Person Expository Messages*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2003.
- Smith, Donald K. *Creating Understanding: A Handbook for Christian Communication Across Cultural Landscapes*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Smith, Robert, Jr. *Doctrine That Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008.
- Stevens, Paul R. *Liberating the Laity*. Dowers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985.
- Stott, John R. W. *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- . *The Contemporary Christian: Applying God’s Word to Today’s World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.
- . *The Preacher’s Portrait*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961.
- Sunukjian, Donald R. *Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth with Clarity and Relevance*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.
- Sweazey, George E. *Preaching the Good News*. Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1976.
- Tate, W. Randolph. *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*. 2nd ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997.
- Tofana, Stelian. “The Holy Scripture in a Secularized World: Efficient or Inefficient?” *Pleroma* 8, no. 2 (June 2006): 7-28.

- Turnbull, Ralph G. *The Preacher's Heritage, Task and Resources*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968.
- Van Seters, Arthur. *Preaching as a Social Act: Theology and Practice*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1988.
- Vines, Jerry, and Jim Shaddix. *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999.
- Walker, Daniel D. *Enemy in the Pew? A Call to Action for the Men and Women to Today's Churches Who Want to Apply Their Christian Faith to the Revitalization of Worship and Daily Living*. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.
- Willhite, Keith, and Scott M. Gibson. *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to the People*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998.
- Winter, Ralph D., and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds. *Perspectives in the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992.

VITA

Paunel (Paul) Muresan was born on August 26, 1960 in Jac, Romania.

Paul graduated from Southern California College (now Vanguard University) in 1995 and from Fuller Theological Seminary in 2003, with an MDiv with concentration in family and pastoral counseling.

Paul started his DMin studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in May 2008 and expects to graduate in May 2012.

Paul lives in California with his wife, Tatiana, and their son, Jean-Paul. Their daughter, Tasha, attends Columbia University in New York, where she is studying psychology.

Paul is the associate pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Westminster, California. His passion is preaching and mission work.